



THE INDEPENDENT

2,950

TUESDAY 2 APRIL 1996 40p (IR 45p)

INSIDE TODAY'S NEW-LOOK SECTION TWO



How fool's gold put a City trader in jail

Section Two, Cover story

Global warming: how the world can help

Our Scorched Earth, part three

High street or top designer: who can tell?

Fashion



Ministers axe plan to cut pollution

Road lobby kills green agenda for traffic

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The Government has turned its back on a green agenda to reduce traffic and encourage more people to use public transport for fear of alienating motorists and the road lobby.

A range of targets to both reduce carbon-dioxide emissions and encourage people to use more environmentally friendly forms of transport such as cycling and walking have been kicked into touch by ministers who are preparing the Government's response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report, which was published 18 months ago.

In Cabinet committee meetings which are finalising the response, Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman and former Secretary of State for Transport, insisted that any reference to targets was removed because it might anger motorists and the motoring lobby. The Government has already committed itself to bringing down the overall level of carbon-dioxide emissions but the Royal Commission had wanted ministers to set specific targets for emissions from vehicles, which is responsible for around one-quarter of the carbon dioxide produced in Britain.

The commission had also set out detailed recommendations on reducing the proportion of urban journeys that are undertaken by car in an effort to im-

prove the air quality in towns. The Government has rejected this recommendation, but has agreed to... "lose a target for cycling. However, ministers have not yet decided to accept the recommendation that by 2005, 10 per cent of journeys in urban areas should be by cycle. The current total is 2.5 per cent.

The document, due to be published early next month, will also be used to set out the re-

sponse to the Government's transport debate initiated more than a year ago by Dr Mawhinney when he was Secretary of State for Transport. Ministers have been anxious not to be portrayed as anti-car, but the document will effectively spell the end of the pro-roads policy that was set out in the 1989 White Paper "Roads to Prosperity", which led to the Government spending more than £2bn per year on new roads.

One senior Conservative source said: "We are moving away from the era of the mega-transport policy which got us into so much trouble over the roads issue and resulted in a lot of money being wasted without solving the congestion problem. The document will be sensible, but unheroic, avoiding the previous approach of trying to find a unique solution for what is a very complex issue."

While the Government will stress that the country still needs some new roads, the idea of building enough roads to cope with increasing traffic will be abandoned. Transport policy has long been predicated on the notion that rising prosperity necessarily leads to increased traffic growth, and the document will suggest ways of breaking that link.

A higher proportion of the Department of Transport's dwindling budget will be spent on public transport and "integrated" approaches to local transport will be encouraged — although the word "integrated" has been banned from the document as having socialist-style planning connotations.

Government ministers have also decided to reject the proposal, put forward by the Automobile Association and backed by Sir George Young, Secretary of State for Transport, that the roads should be privatised and motorists should pay tolls rather than a petrol tax.

"That was not going to go down well with Mr and Mrs average motorist", a well-placed source said, "and anyway, the technology is nowhere near available."

Last week, the DoT admitted that trials on tolling technology had slipped behind schedule because of financing and technical problems. Environmentalists will be deeply disappointed that the targets have been dropped. Stephen Joseph, the director of the pro-transport group Transport 2000, said: "There will be no real progress in reducing the environmental damage from transport unless clear targets are set at both the local and national levels."

Cyclone turns lifesaving contest into struggle to survive



Two boats competing in the Australian national surf lifesaving contest collide, throwing a 15-year-old crewmember of the boat on the left to his death. A sea carnival, of which the contest was a part, had gone ahead despite waves as high as 10ft being whipped up by Cyclone Bets along Queensland's Gold Coast. Photograph: Reuters

Tories hide behind 'front' to raise cash

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The Conservatives are using a secretive "front" organisation to tap the City and industry for cash in the run-up to the general election, according to a report in the *Independent*.

News of the Council's activities will reopen the controversy about party political funding. It highlights the increasingly important role played by senior ministers and raises questions about preferential access for party backers. Last night, John Prescott, the Labour Deputy Leader, wrote to the Prime Minister demanding to know what guidance ministers receive before attending party fund-raising events.

Mr Prescott said he was also concerned that by making a do-

ing potential donors to meet Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has been passed to the *Independent*. The address of the Council is given as 32 Smith Square, London SW1 — the same address as Conservative Central Office. In the letter, Sir Nigel Mobbs writes: "The CILC arranges periodic meetings with the Prime Minister and other senior ministers..." The next meeting, he wrote, was to be with Mr Lang "by invitation of Arthur Andersen & Co", the giant accountancy and management consultancy firm, at its offices in central London.

Last night, a spokesman for Arthur Andersen said the meeting with Mr Lang was "hosted by a partner rather than the firm." It was a private matter for

the partner whom he would not name, but added: "The firm does not have any political affiliations."

Mr Lang, said Sir Nigel, would "make a short opening statement and will then take part in questions and answers." The President of the Board of Trade would then stay on "to meet those present over a drink".

Sir Nigel Mobbs' office said he was in Los Angeles on business and could not be contacted. A Tory Central Office spokesman said the party had no comment to make about the Council.

Slough Grandee, page 2



Europe dashes hopes of lifting British beef ban

SARAH HELM
and COLIN BROWN

European ministers last night dashed hopes of the immediate lifting of the worldwide ban on the export of British beef after plans for 4.6 million cows to be destroyed met a cool reception from Britain's EU partners.

Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister, was last night fighting to persuade European ministers at an emergency meeting in Luxembourg to lift the ban, but sources said it would be "weeks" before it would be ended, and would not be agreed until the European veterinary committee was satisfied. "We will lift the embargo when we have a total guarantee we have no risk," said Philippe Vasseur, the French agriculture minister.

The European ministers

were also resisting British demands for the EU to pay 80 per cent of the estimated £3.7bn cost of the six year slaughter programme. German sources argued for Britain to pay at least 30 per cent of the cost and the French dismissed Mr Hogg's demands as "unrealistic".

As the hard-bargaining continued late into the night, there were signs that the European ministers wanted a more radical plan for slaughter of animals. Mr Hogg proposed killing and destroying all cows over 30 months, which were most at risk.

European ministers expressed fears that BSE could be in younger cattle and wanted entire herds of productive dairy cattle slaughtered and the meat incinerated. That could be a disaster for British farmers, unless they are fully compensated.

Ministers are seeking new ways of identifying BSE in cattle in order to cull herds positively identified with BSE to cut down the costs of a slaughter programme. John Major, the Prime Minister, told the Commons Britain was looking at "novel ways of getting the right beasts".

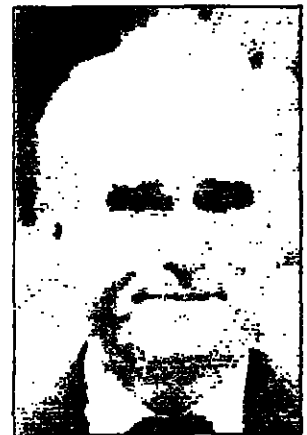
There was growing anger among Tory MPs last night at the refusal of the EU partners to agree to the lifting of the ban. The plan proposed by Britain entails the building of more incinerators to meet the workload. Some meat may have to be sold stored until it can be burned.

About 15,000 such cattle are slaughtered in Britain each week and their meat sold for low-grade food products such as burgers, sausages or beef by-products. In future these cattle

would be incinerated. Senior British agriculture officials said yesterday this process would continue for between five and six years, to ensure the disease had been removed.

At the rate of 15,000 cattle a week, a total of 780,000 cattle a year would have to go through incinerators, but there is only UK incinerator capacity to deal with a maximum of 3,000 a week. Over six years, the total number of British cattle incinerated could total 4,680,000.

Mr Hogg pressed his European partners to lift the ban as soon as possible. However, hopes that a deal might be reached yesterday dimmed. "This is the biggest challenge to the common agricultural policy since its inception," said Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner.



Brian Mawhinney: Opposed setting 'green' targets

prove the air quality in towns. The Government has rejected this recommendation, but has agreed to... "lose a target for cycling. However, ministers have not yet decided to accept the recommendation that by 2005, 10 per cent of journeys in urban areas should be by cycle. The current total is 2.5 per cent.

The document, due to be published early next month, will also be used to set out the re-

IN BRIEF

Lamp 'cures cancer'
A lamp, no bigger than a toaster has been used to kill cancer cells successfully. Page 3

Toddler's body found
A body believed to be that of toddler John Bristow has been found in a ditch. Page 3

Soviet spy sued
The Government is suing Soviet spy George Blake over his book about MI6. Page 4

Today's weather
Dry with sunny spells after a chilly start. Section Two, page 25

New male contraceptive is just the jab

REBECCA FOWLER

The male contraceptive "pill" has proved to be 99 per cent successful, a team of international scientists announced yesterday.

In the course of two year trials, at 15 centres around the world, the contraceptive was tested on more than 400 men and it has been shown it to be as effective as the pill for women, and safer than using a condom.

The British doctor on the re-

search team, Dr Fred Wu, a senior lecturer at Manchester University, described it as a "breakthrough" for the male contraceptive. He said: "It is very significant. It is really showing the world for the first time that permanent contraception for men really works."

For the men testing the contraceptive the only drawback is the form it comes in, a painful injection administered in the buttock each week. Further trials are already underway for longer-term injections com-

bined with a pill and skin patches, which are expected to take eight years to complete.

The contraceptive works by secreting the male hormone testosterone into the body to reduce his sperm count to a negligible amount. It fools the man's body into believing it has already produced adequate levels, because there is so much of the hormone in his system.

In previous tests the researchers had already discovered that sperm counts in 60 per cent of men could be reduced

to zero by weekly injections, and this could be achieved without affecting their sex life.

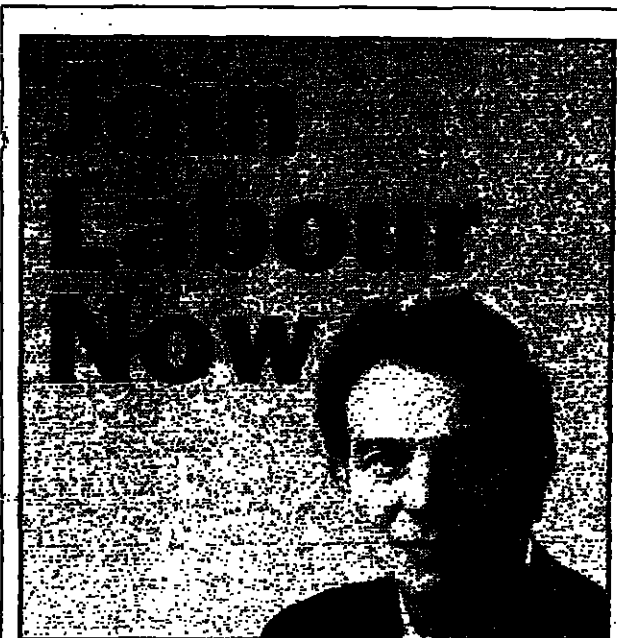
The new tests have revealed that it could be effective in a further 38.6 per cent of men by reducing the sperm count to a newly-discovered critical level. This had a failure rate of only 1.4 pregnancies in 100 couples.

Among the men who did not find success with the male contraceptive during trials was Kevin McQuade, 41. He was one of 29 volunteers at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester,

involved in the 18 month trial. He received the weekly injection from September 1993 and by March 1994 his sperm count had dropped from 40m to 200,000. Doctors declared him infertile, only for his wife to discover she was pregnant seven months later.

He received the weekly injection from September 1993 and by March 1994 his sperm count had dropped from 40m to 200,000. Doctors declared him infertile, only for his wife to discover she was pregnant seven months later.

He received the weekly injection from September 1993 and by March 1994 his sperm count had dropped from 40m to 200,000. Doctors declared him infertile, only for his wife to discover she was pregnant seven months later.



Together we'll give everyone a stake in Britain's future

0990 300 900

(National call rates apply. Calls should cost no more than 10p per minute.)

☐ £15 Standard rate **A72**

☐ £5 Reduced rate: Student/unemployed/pensioner/retired/ on a government training scheme (upon request)

☐ £3 Registered voter: I am a levy-paying member of a trade union affiliated to the Labour Party. I have paid the political levy for the last 12 months.

(Name of person and payment number)

☐ I enclose an additional donation of £

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE) Total £

Full name DM OF

Address

Postcode Date of Birth

Please do not write on this form. It is to be used to determine your local party.

Enclosed Cheque/Postal Order, payable to 'The Labour Party' (accepts direct payment and contribution of The Labour Party)

Signature Date

Please return the entire form to: The Labour Party, Room 408, PRESTON, John Rylands, 159, Walkworth Road, L1 1BB. No stamp required.

Labour

section ONE BUSINESS 18-22 COMMENT 16,17 CROSSWORD 26 GAZETTE 14 LEADING ARTICLES 16 LETTERS 16 NEWS ANALYSIS 15 OBITUARIES 14 SHARES 21 SPORT 23-26 UNIT TRUSTS 22

section TWO ARCHITECTURE 10,11 ARTS 9 CHESS 23 CROSSWORD 26 FASHION 14,15 HEALTH 6-8 LISTINGS 24,25 MEDIA 16-18 TV & RADIO 27,28 VISUAL ARTS 12,13 WEATHER 25

Handwritten signature or mark at the bottom of the page.

news

G7 summit: Ministers head for clash with EU partners by insisting on flexible labour markets

Britain rejects social clauses for trade pacts

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The UK was heading for a damaging split with its European partners at the jobs summit in Lille, northern France, last night after rejecting demands for social clauses in international trade agreements.

The dispute dashed hopes that the meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations would endorse the British emphasis on jobs flexibility as the solution to unemployment.

In a move that angered the French and Germans, William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and Gillian Shepherd, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, rejected demands for the introduction of minimum labour standards in international agreements.

Mr Waldegrave said: "There is a considerable danger of seeing protectionism creeping in through the back door through such clauses." Britain was backed by Canadian and Japanese delegates who see export growth as the best way to raise standards in poor countries.

However, the European Union's social affairs commissioner, Padraig Flynn, will today call on the ministers to stop ducking the question of whether developing countries gain an unfair advantage from exploiting their workforce.

Earlier the French President Jacques Chirac said in his opening address that so-called social clauses in trade agreements were the only way to avoid protectionism.

The row echoes European concerns that Britain will gain additional competitive bene-

fits from opting out of the EU's Social Chapter.

There were further confrontations between Britain and its partners over the need for macro-economic co-ordination. Mr Chirac said economic, and especially monetary, co-ordination would be on the agenda at the next G7 summit in June.

Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, joined the attack. In a clear reference to the recent Franco-German plan for a second exchange rate mechanism for currencies outside the single European currency, to which Britain is firmly opposed, he said: "We must co-ordinate our policies to prevent beggar-thy-neighbour policies which simply move the problems from one country to another."

Britain also found itself isolated in its approach to tackling unemployment. Mrs Shepherd claimed deregulation had given Britain a better record of job creation than many of the other G7 countries. The perception of job insecurity was not fully borne out by the evidence, she said, sailing close to a recent statement by the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, that job insecurity was a "state of mind".

"Our record certainly is better than the other major European economies by far," Mrs Shepherd insisted. This was due to refusing to accept the burdens of the Social Chapter and minimum wage, she argued.

"Pain has to accompany any kind of change or restructuring. We had to face up to it," she said, agreeing that it would be difficult for the Continental economies to tackle inflexibility.

Mrs Shepherd emphasised the importance of facing up to change in the world economies.

She backed an argument made by Joseph Stiglitz, chairman of the US Council of Economic Advisers. Mr Stiglitz told delegates that security of employment had to give way to "security of employability". Workers needed to be equipped with the skills to cope with change.

The US is the only G7 country to have a more deregulated labour market than Britain. But the Clinton administration is alarmed about the growing income inequality and crime.

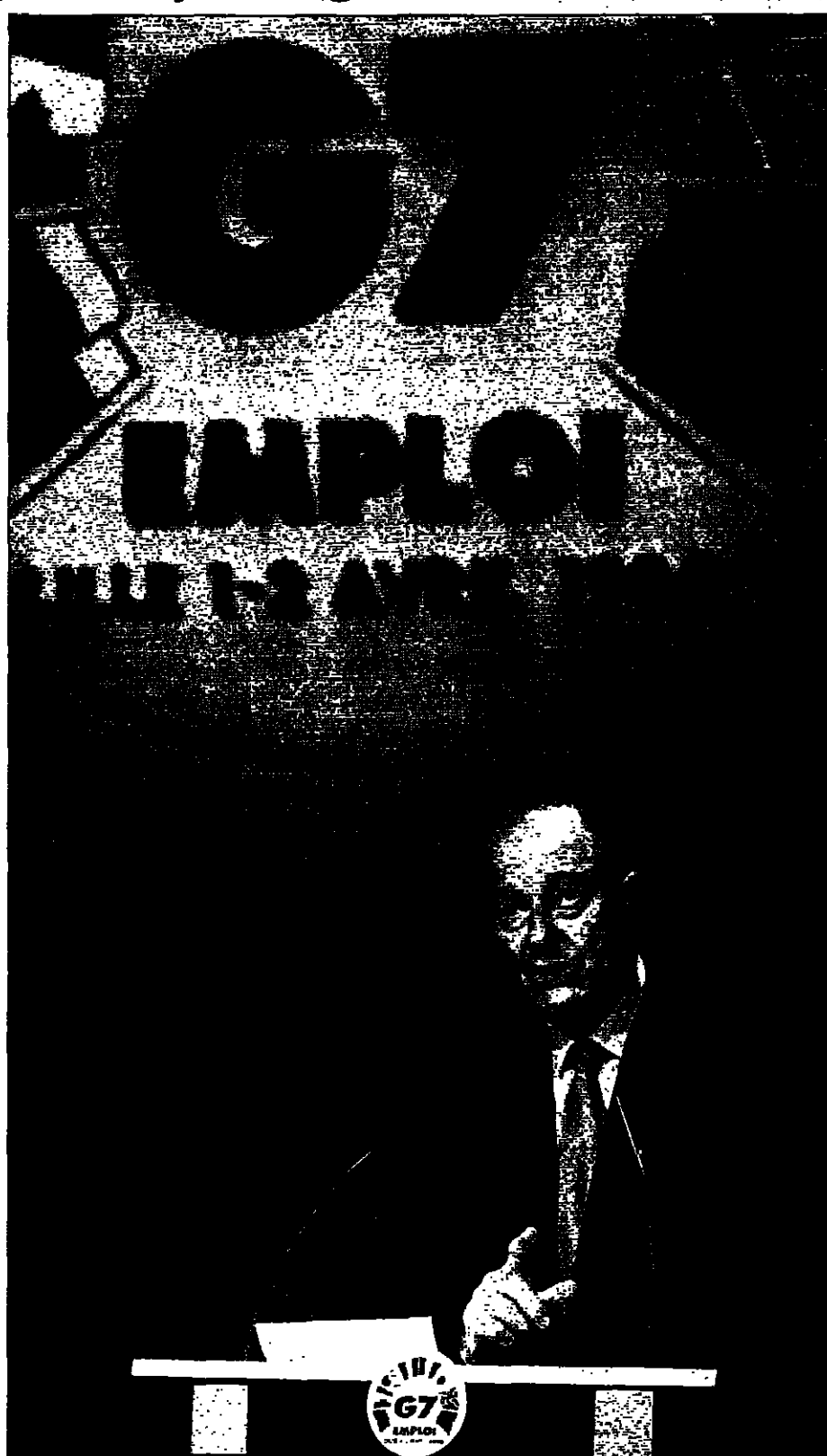
Britain could learn from Continental methods of vocational training, Mrs Shepherd said yesterday, but there was no alternative to the UK strategy.

"The message for the creation of jobs is absolutely clear. You have to have a strong economy. You have to reduce burdens on employers and you have to have a flexible labour market," Britain's G7 partners, especially the Germans, agreed that there was a role for structural reform of their labour markets, but they placed a much greater emphasis on social cohesion.

Mr Chirac said "crude types of flexibility" were an obstacle to the creation of high quality jobs. "We are deeply attached to our European social model, founded on social security in keeping with human dignity," he said.

The summit, which ends today, was billed as an opportunity to exchange ideas on how to cut unemployment in the world's richest countries from its current level of more than 22 million.

Leading article, page 16



Speaking out: French President Jacques Chirac at the G7 employment meeting in Lille in which he said 'crude types of flexibility' were an obstacle to jobs. Photograph: Reuters

Police get new terror powers

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Emergency legislation to meet police demands for greater powers to stop and search terrorist suspects is to be rushed through and onto the statute books by Wednesday.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, yesterday told the Commons that the measures - to be introduced through amendments to the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act - were urgently needed to counter the renewed IRA threat, following the Docklands bombing, which ended the ceasefire.

But the announcement was immediately condemned by some Labour and Liberal Democrat MPs, while justice and human rights groups warned against the dangers of sweeping through "ill-thought-through" legislation. Parts of the 1974 Act have already been found by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg to breach international conventions on rights.

And Seamus Mallon, deputy leader of Northern Ireland's nationalist SDLP, described the move as "underhand in the extreme".

He said ministers had not mentioned proposals to "railroad" new measures through the Commons when the Prevention of Terrorism Act was renewed last month.

"It shows complete contempt for parliamentary procedure... They have engineered a situation where important and far-reaching powers will be introduced, affecting the communities in Britain as much as Northern Ireland, without any notice, analysis, consultation or amendment."

But Labour's front bench - anxious to avoid attack from Mr Howard that it is soft on crime or terrorists - has already made clear it will not obstruct the Government's counter terrorism proposals.

IN BRIEF

Inquiry ordered into island cancer claims

A health chief has been ordered to investigate claims that cancer cases in the Western Isles of Scotland are linked to the Chernobyl disaster ten years ago. The inquiry was ordered by the isles' health board after the claims, revealed by the *Independent* on Sunday, were made by two doctors on Benbecula. It will be carried out by the area's Director of Public Health, Dr Mike George, after GPs Francis Tierney and Andrew Senior reported that 19 new cases of cancer had emerged on the island since 1994 when only six were expected. Dr George said there was no need for mass screening and no link between radiation and the type of cancer found.

New refit for QE2

The QE2 is to enter dry dock in December for a major refit, almost two years after a similar overhaul ended with Cunard the ship's owner, paying out £7.5m in compensation. The 1994 refit, which cost £30m, was unfinished when the ship sailed from Southampton to New York. Some passengers were left behind because not enough cabins were available and work continued during the cruise.

You must be kidding

The town of Haslemere, in Surrey, woke yesterday to find that it had been re-named "Trumpington" after the children's TV programme. In an April Fools Day prank, the area's 60-plus road signs and markings had been changed overnight.

Family's body shock

The battered body of a 25-year-old man was discovered by members of his family in undergrowth next to a railway line. Melvyn Green of Broad Street village, near Guildford, Surrey, was reported missing late on Saturday. Detectives were yesterday questioning a man at Guildford police station.

Moscow air horror

Three Britons were killed when a Russian fighter pilot flew into power cables while showing off his plane, an inquest heard yesterday. Colonel Viktor Khaykov hit the cables as he took air buffs Anthony Naylor, 30, of Pontefract, West Yorkshire, Russell Bessey, 37, of Woking, Surrey, and David Stephens, 38, of Pershore, Worcestershire, on a tour of Moscow last August. Verdicts of accidental death were recorded by the Wakefield coroner, David Hinchcliff.

Bid to save ponies

A 40 mph speed limit has been imposed across Dartmoor yesterday to help protect its famous ponies and other wildlife. Some 300 ponies, sheep and cattle are killed by cars every year on the 363 square mile National Park in Devon. Sheep and cattle will wear reflective bands at night.

No go-go place

A former stripper told a licensing hearing that plans by nightclub owner Peter Stringfellow to have topless dancers at his club in Covent Garden, London, will give the "green light" to men who think women are "for sale". The girls will be paid when guests put a £10 note in their stocking tops.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	...Sch40	Norway	...£6.00
Belgium	...£11.00	Italy	...£14.00
Canada	...£13.00	Malta	...£3.25
Cyprus	...£23.20	Netherlands	...£3.00
Denmark	...£14.18	Norway	...£6.00
Finland	...£14.18	Portugal	...£6.25
France	...£14.18	Spain	...£6.00
Germany	...£14.18	Sweden	...£6.25
Greece	...£14.18	Switzerland	...£14.00
Luxembourg	...£14.18	USA	...£14.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

By mail, 12 weeks: Europe £110.75; Zone 1 (USA, Canada, Mexico and India) £184.00; Zone 2 (Africa and Australasia) £206.70. To order, please send cheque payable to J. & J. News, or credit card details to J. & J. News, or call 0171 536 0288. Credit cards welcome.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the Independent are available from: Newsline Newspapers, telephone 0208 429451.

Grandee of Slough who directs Tory cash drive

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

It comes as no surprise that Sir Nigel Mobbs should be chairing the Conservatives' anonymous fund-raising group, The City and Industrial Liaison Council.

For few businessmen have so successfully straddled the twin worlds of commerce and politics as Sir Nigel, 58. Neither are many people so closely identified with one place.

His chosen patch is Slough, reviled by Sir John Betjeman but for Sir Nigel a place of serious influence and undoubted wealth.

Since joining Slough Estates, the property company, in 1961, after school at Marlborough College and university at Christ Church, Oxford, he has based himself in the town.

He now runs Slough Estates, which under his stewardship has grown to be one of the country's biggest property developers, managing a portfolio worth £1.8bn and is chairman of Corporate Health, formerly Slough Occupational Health Service and of Slough Social Fund.

Locally, he is also president of the Buckinghamshire Association of Boys Clubs and head of the Council of the University of Buckingham.

Nationally, he used to be chairman of Kingfisher, the re-

Chris Blackhurst profiles Sir Nigel Mobbs, overseer of the Conservatives' shadowy fund-raising group



Sir Nigel: Straddling worlds of politics and commerce

tail group that owns Woolworths, and is on the board of Barclays Bank.

As to be expected, quangos have not passed him by. He served on the Property Services Agency Advisory Board and on the Department of Trade and Industry's panel on deregulation. He is also a member of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Sir Nigel, who is married with three children, was knighted in 1986. He is a member of the "board of treasurers" of leading businessmen assembled by Charles Hambro at Tory Central Office to try to wipe out the party's crushing bank overdraft.

He has made no secret of his party affiliations, once writing a letter to a newspaper claiming companies are subject to tighter rules on disclosure than trade unions.

"There is a legal requirement on companies, public and private, to declare in their accounts any donations they make to political parties," wrote Sir Nigel.

"There is no such legal requirement on unions, nor does the Labour Party publish a list showing how much every individual union gives."

that the event was hosted by an individual partner, not the firm.

Andersen, which was reportedly blacklisted by the Government for accounting advice over its role as auditor for De Lorean, the sports-car firm that was backed by public money and collapsed spectacularly in 1982, has been trying to rehabilitate itself with Whitehall.

A writ from the Government seeking damages of £168m for negligence over De Lorean apart, Andersen has still been picking up government work.

Its autonomous consultancy side, Andersen Consulting, has received contracts worth more than £50m from the Government since the dispute with its accountancy division began, the biggest of which, for £34m, came from the Department of Social Security.

Other branches of government, including the Ministry of Defence and departments of Employment and Overseas Development, have also awarded contracts to Andersen.

In 1993, the accountancy side reportedly approached the Government to be re-considered for public-sector business.

The firm was said to have held discussions with senior officials and ministers over a possible breach of European Union law for being excluded from government contracts.

Mr Andersen said yesterday that the event was hosted by an individual partner, not the firm.

Referendum decision possible before Easter

DONALD MACINTYRE

John Major and a powerful coalition of Cabinet ministers will seek tomorrow to overcome the objections of Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, and secure full backing for a pledge not to enter a single currency without a referendum.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, who has thrown his weight behind an early decision to promise a referendum, has already submitted to Downing Street his paper detailing the options on how to operate such a referendum.

The paper is expected to be circulated to the Cabinet today for discussion on Wednesday, holding out at least the possibility that the Prime Minister could announce a decision before the Commons rises for Easter later in the day.

Mr Clarke's decision not to attend a meeting of Group of Seven finance ministers in Lille yesterday triggered a fresh alarm in Westminster amid fears that he could be prepared to push his opposition to a referendum pledge to the point of resignation.

But Downing Street dismissed suggestions that he had remained in London for emergency talks with Mr Major on the referendum issue, pointing out that both the Canadian and United States finance ministers had pulled out of the meeting.

Mr Clarke has also been heavily involved in the negotiations with Brussels over the hoped-for BSE compensation deal.

There were unconfirmed hints in Whitehall yesterday that while

the Commons rises for Easter later in the day.

Mr Clarke's decision not to attend a meeting of Group of Seven finance ministers in Lille yesterday triggered a fresh alarm in Westminster amid fears that he could be prepared to push his opposition to a referendum pledge to the point of resignation.

But Downing Street dismissed suggestions that he had remained in London for emergency talks with Mr Major on the referendum issue, pointing out that both the Canadian and United States finance ministers had pulled out of the meeting.

Mr Clarke has also been heavily involved in the negotiations with Brussels over the hoped-for BSE compensation deal.

There were unconfirmed hints in Whitehall yesterday that while

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, agrees strongly with Mr Clarke, he could emerge as a mediator between him and the referendum pledge supporters, including Mr Major.

As some senior Cabinet ministers continued to express deep incredulity at the idea that Mr Clarke would push his objections to the point of resignation, one said the issue of whether the Euro-sceptics would seek to exploit a referendum by demanding more concessions was not an issue of "principle but tactics".

Mr Rifkind's paper does not make recommendations but is thought to lean towards the idea of a referendum coming after a Parliamentary decision endorsing a Cabinet decision.

News Analysis, page 15

Signs of recovery for house prices

NIC CICUTTI

Mounting evidence of a recovery in the housing market gained fresh impetus yesterday after figures from Halifax Building Society showed prices rose by 1.2 per cent in March, the biggest monthly gain in two years.

The rise, the eighth consecutive month in which prices have gone up, means the cost of a home is 1.7 per cent higher

than a year ago, despite the collapse throughout much of last year. The society said yesterday: "We are continuing to forecast a rise of 2 per cent for the year as a whole, but clearly this will be reviewed if the pattern of recent months is sustained."

The society added: "Gary Marshall, head of corporate affairs at the Halifax, warned, however, that there appeared to be a change in the

seasonal pattern of house prices since the Budget was moved from March to November in 1993. Before that, house prices tended to rise from the end of March, but now prices appeared to increase much earlier, only to peter out as the year progressed."

The Halifax survey differed from that of Nationwide Building Society, which last week said prices were flat in March.

You deserve down when you're up.

Super soft - down pillow
Emirates
THE FINEST IN THE SKY

SUPERSOFT PILLOWS, VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE, PERSONAL

JUST THREE OF THE COMFORTS YOU'LL ENJOY FLYING FIRST OR BUSINESS CLASS ON AWARD-WINNING EMIRATES. CALL US ON 0171 536 0288 (LONDON) OR 0161 437 9097 (MANCHESTER), OR CALL YOUR TRAVEL AGENT.

Emirates

Pepsi turns the air blue as it tries to mirror Coke's red revolution

GLENDIA COOPER

The smiles will be wide and the fingers will be crossed today as Pepsi attempts supremacy in the global cola wars with a bevy of supermodels, a tennis star and a Concorde painted blue.

The marketing executives will be well aware that re-launching a cola is a dangerous business as Coca Cola found to its cost when it tried to alter the secret recipe.

But in a move that Pepsi describes as "the most important marketing development in its 100 year history" - and appar-

ently the most expensive - the company is ditching its traditional red-and-blue can and replacing it with an electric blue one to differentiate it from its main rival Coca Cola.

Air France has agreed to paint one of its Concorde in the new Pepsi colour, at an esti-

mated cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds as part of the promotion to launch the new cans.

The plane has been chartered for at least 10 days as part of the promotion to launch the new blue cans.

Today journalists from 40

countries are being flown and shipped to London Gatwick Airport to witness the news conference to end all news conferences, with supermodels Cindy Crawford and Claudia Schiffer and tennis star Andre Agassi present.

As another part of the campaign Pepsi have also paid the *Daily Mirror*, long-time Labour supporter to go blue for the day.

Today will also be the first airing of the new Pepsi commercial starring Crawford and Agassi. It is estimated to cost £3m, the most expensive ever made.

In the bitter cola wars, Pepsi has always run second to the market leader Coca-Cola, the world's most recognised brand, which this year trumps its sponsorship of the Olympic Games in Atlanta, Euro '96, Wimbledon and the Coca Cola cup.

The two big brands are particularly under pressure in Britain from Virgin Cola and many supermarket own-brands. Virgin yesterday ran an April Fool's advertising campaign warning customers "if the can turns blue the cola's gone flat".

Lamp lights the way to skin cancer cure

GLENDIA COOPER

A lamp, no bigger than a household toaster, has been used to kill cancer cells successfully, a cancer charity said yesterday.

The device, invented by Dr Colin Whitehurst at the Paterson Institute in Manchester, emits an intense area of light directed on the affected area and has so far successfully treated 150 trial patients with early skin cancer.

Dr Whitehurst, who works for the Cancer Research Campaign's department of experimental radiation oncology, has spent more than five years developing photodynamic therapy (PDT).

The target area is pre-treated with a photosensitive drug which is activated by the light. Patients are able to read a book or relax while having the treatment, which is entirely painless. "PDT involves spreading a special cream on certain skin cancers which is taken up by the cancer cells. These cells are then killed by light from the new light source," said Dr Whitehurst.

The new lamp is 20 times cheaper to buy or operate than

conventional lasers. "The therapeutic effect of our light source, based on pre-clinical and patient tests, has been shown to be the same as or in some cases an improvement over certain lasers," Dr Whitehurst said.

Clinical trials are presently going on at the Glasgow Western Infirmary and Cookridge hospital, Leeds. Tests have been done on patients with early skin cancer (Bowen's disease) and so-called "rodent ulcers" (basal cell carcinomas) - the most common type of skin cancer in Britain.

To date 180 pre-cancerous and cancerous skin lesions have been treated and completely cleared. In Bowen's disease the lamp was shown to compare very favourably with the best current clinical practice and little if no scarring or side-effects have been noted, the charity said. Doctors have been encouraged by the results and are subsequently planning tests for brain, breast, gullet, prostate, bowel and gynaecological cancers as well as the skin disease psoriasis.

Professor Gordon McVie, who took up the post of director general of the CRC yesterday said: "This treatment for skin conditions can be applied on an outpatient basis and is both effective and people-friendly and is already being used in Glasgow and Leeds with convincing results."

"This is truly a remarkable invention which we believe will make a vital contribution to the way other important cancers are treated."

However, the charity admits that more research is still needed. PDT is currently not effective for melanoma nor for deeply spreading tumours.

"Although more research is required to define its place in cancer therapy, PDT using the new light looks to be a useful new weapon in the battle against cancer," said Dr Colin Morton, who has helped to conduct the trials at Glasgow's Western Infirmary.

CRC Technology, the Cancer Research Campaign's technology transfer arm, has filed a patent application to safeguard the invention.

Deals are expected to be announced shortly with American and UK-based companies to further develop the lamp for the international market.



Bright spark: Dr Whitehurst using the photodynamic therapy on a skin cancer patient

Photograph: Edward Webb

Toddler found dead in dyke

WILL BENNETT

A body believed to be that of the missing toddler John Bristow was found in a water-filled ditch only 30 yards from his home in a travellers' camp in Kent yesterday.

A police diver found the body wedged under rubbish 5ft under water during a search of the area around the 21-month-old boy's home near Lydd. It is thought he fell in accidentally.

John was last seen at 5pm on Sunday as he played outside his home on the caravan site. The search was delayed by a misunderstanding between his mother, Tracey Beane, and his grandmother, Annie Beane. His mother believed he had gone into Lydd with his grandmother and did not realise that he was missing until the latter returned. Travellers on the site immediately searched the area and called in the police.

After the body was found there were scuffles and some travellers shouted abuse at police for calling off the search during the night. But Douglas Dunn, John's grandfather, said: "There is no question of blaming the police. They were searching until late last night and they did their best."

Detective Chief Inspector Andrew Felton said the body was not found earlier because divers had to enter the ditch in darkness and feel their way through the water which was clogged with debris. "It was very murky and there were very high winds. Conditions were awful."



John Bristow: Search delayed by a misunderstanding

Lottery fillip for young stars of stage and sport

ROS WYNNE-JONES

Talented young people in sports and the arts are to benefit from National Lottery funds under a rule change unveiled yesterday by the Secretary of State for National Heritage, Virginia Bottomley.

Lottery "good causes" money, currently channelled into buildings and equipment, will now be open to bids which develop the potential of people, with emphasis on the young.

Mrs Bottomley said: "The lottery has been successful in creating and enhancing the physical fabric of our arts, heritage and sports worlds. The popular success of the lottery will allow us to invest in the nation's human capital as well as its buildings."

Labour quickly claimed credit for the idea. At Commons questions, Dr Jack Cunningham, the party's heritage

spokesman, told Mrs Bottomley he welcomed the move "because what you have done is to implement Labour policy". He said he had put the idea to her on "25 October last year". Mrs Bottomley said she was not going to spend time arguing over "ownership of the concept".

Sports and arts bodies welcomed the move. A spokesman for the Sports Council said: "We gave the heritage department a wish list and have got nearly everything we asked for. We have received over £180m from the lottery in schemes aimed at improving the bricks and mortar and now we will be able to look at other ways of funding sports."

Under the rule changes, money can be used to establish "talent funds" to develop the abilities of performers and artists; aid sports coaching and talent-spotting projects at grassroots and elite levels; and increase access to the arts, for example by supporting touring companies and subsidised ticket schemes for schools and community groups. It can also be used to fund one-off major sporting events.

The money can also now be used to restore historic buildings by extending aid to building preservation trusts.

A spokesman for the Department of National Heritage said the aim of the new rules, issued under the National Lottery Act, was to give organisations the "freedom to invest in talented individuals".

For the arts, it would mean investment in creative ability. "For example, at the moment companies like the RSC have beautiful homes in London and Stratford, but not everyone will be able to go and see them. This will bring the best of drama, music and dance to regional audiences," he said.

'Orgy of violence' schoolboys jailed

Three sixth formers were jailed yesterday after attacking two men during a drunken orgy of violence.

Cardiff Crown Court was told that Andrew Groom, David Vadden and David Willey, all 19, had brought shame on their families.

Instead of starting university they were locked up in a young offenders' institution after Judge John Curran told how they "exulted" in a rampage when they savagely attacked a church caretaker and a man who came to his rescue.

Sentencing them, he said: "There cannot be a separate law for those with intelligence." Groom, Vadden and Willey

were all pupils at Cardiff High School - rated as the best in Wales - when they broke from their A-level studies and went on a binge drinking beer and cider near their homes in Cyncoed, a middle class suburb of Cardiff.

As they walked home, disabled caretaker Eric Cobourne and Ian Birtle, a book keeper, took the full brunt of their brutality, the court was told.

Mr Cobourne, 50, was kicked in the face outside his church while Mr Birtle, 33, was knocked almost unconscious as he tried to halt the violence. Mr Cobourne died two weeks later but his death was found to be from natural causes.

David Aubrey, for the prosecution, said: "They rampaged around the streets of this normally quiet suburb, behaving like three drunken hooligans."

In a trail of damage they wrecked a garden wall and gate. A Mercedes car was also vandalised. "Cobourne was verbally abused and then Groom threw a bottle at his head, leaving him with a wound that needed several stitches."

Mr Cobourne was then kicked in the head by Vadden. Mr Aubrey said: "It's claimed Vadden then turned to friends and boasted 'Did you see that - his nose just exploded'."

Asked why they had picked on Mr Cobourne, Vadden said:

"He was obviously not a Cyncoed person, he was different."

Mr Birtle was attacked and chased down the road before being kicked and punched. Mr Aubrey said: "Groom told him 'Say you are sorry'."

The trio admitted violent disorder and causing actual bodily harm. They were convicted of attempting to cause grievous bodily harm. Groom and Vadden were also found guilty of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

All three youths were said to be ashamed of their actions. Groom and Vadden were sent to a young offenders' centre for two years. Willey was ordered to be detained for 18 months.

Channel ferry firm cuts price of duty-free goods

NICOLE VEASH

A cross-Channel ferry company has cut duty-free prices on beer, spirits and cigarettes in an attempt to safeguard Easter trade from its rival Eurotunnel.

Stena has cut prices on all its routes to France by up to two-thirds and is selling 24 cans of Fosters for £9.99, £20 less than the average High Street price.

Although this is the second year Stena has reduced selected duty-free lines at Easter, the move is seen as a retaliation to a long-term promotion by Eurotunnel which is offering 60 per cent off retail off-duty-free prices at its terminals in Folkestone and Calais.

Eurotunnel, which is selling a litre of gin for £4.65, a litre of vodka and whisky for £6.65 and 200 cigarettes at £9.05 said the ferry companies were doing too little too late to save their duty-free business. Dominic Fry, director of communications, said: "Ours is a long-term pricing policy and not just a special offer. Unlike us, the ferry companies are offering an extremely limited range of products. Customers who want to buy duty free are just not travelling on the ferries any more."

A spokesman for Stena said the yearly product promotions were extremely successful and he described the company as a "floating shop". He added: "We must give people reasons to travel across the channel by ferry, but we are not just a retail chain we are a leisure service company. The brands on offer are popular and well-known. The people love it and they keep coming back for more."

However rival ferry company, P&O, said it would not be cutting duty-free prices. "We don't need to manipulate prices for people to travel with us," a spokesman said. Recent retail industry figures show cross-Channel purchases account for 14.7 per cent of the UK's "off-trade" - items bought in off licences or supermarkets - and experts predict the share could grow by 20 per cent by 2000.

How supermarket prices compare with air and sea terminals

	Gordon's gin (1 litre)	Smirnoff vodka (1L)	Bell's whisky (1L)	24 cans Fosters	200 Benson & Hedges/Silk Cut
Asda (UK)	£14.79	£14.79	£15.99	£9.49	£27.10
Sainsbury's (UK)	14.79	14.79	15.99	n/a	n/a
Victoria Wine (UK)	14.79	14.79	15.99	n/a	n/a
Asda (France)	8.96	12.59	10.24/99	4.42	n/a
Sainsbury's (France)	11.96	11.38	14.41	n/a	n/a
Victoria Wine (France)					
Asda (Euro)	7.48	9.99**	8.30	7.99	13.00
Sainsbury's/Gatwick	6.35	8.00	6.45	7.35	10.00
Victoria Wine	10.25	11.25**	11.25	9.99	15.50
Asda	9.99	10.99**	11.45	10.95	15.50

*Price of cigarettes cannot be compared
**Price of Blue Label
*All purchases are subject to quantity restrictions

The CO-OPERATIVE BANK

Free for life. Guaranteed.



No annual fee. Ever • Transfer your existing balance at just 1% per month (12.6% APR variable)
• Example: with a £3,000 balance on a Barclays or NatWest Bank credit card you could save up to £290 over two years* • We will match your existing credit limit • Gold Card limit £3000 minimum • No need to bank with us • Call now.

0800 000 365
Call free quoting reference 57054

The bank may decline any application. Credit facilities are subject to status and are available to minors. Customers must use the card at least 10 times per year. Written questions are available on request. Co-operative Bank Visa cards at 21.7% APR. *Typical example is based on a transfer balance of £3,000 the balance is repaid in full over a period of 24 months and payments are made 25 days after statement date. Barclays Bank Visa card @ 23.4% APR would cost £67.50. NatWest Visa card at 23.4% APR would cost £71.40. Co-operative Bank balance transfer at 12.6% APR would cost £416.40 over 24 months. If you are correct at 11.9% Repayment Offer: The Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 101, 1 Ballin Street, Manchester, M60 4EP

THE NET THAT SETS YOU FREE.

125

MINUTES MAXIMUM FOR £26.44 ON REGULAR CALLER PLUS*
CELLNET

THE NET THAT SETS YOU BACK.

minutes maximum for £29.38 on talk 60*
orange

RING 0800 21 4000 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

THE NET THAT SETS YOU FREE. **cellnet**

4
news

Safeguards urged for water industry plans

MARY FAGAN
Industrial Correspondent

The Government is to introduce more competition in the water industry, but has said that choice would be initially limited to companies using hundreds of millions of litres every year.

The proposals, announced yesterday, were attacked as "nowt much" by the Labour Party which warned that average customers must not end up paying more to offset lower bills for industry.

Consumer groups also said that there must be safeguards to ensure that households, which have no ability to shop around, are not sacrificed for the sake of a "political gimmick".

A spokeswoman for the Consumers' Association said: "We welcome the extension of competition but it could be very expensive to move water

around the country and this could add to prices for the average consumer. There could be cross-subsidies and domestic consumers could actually see their bills going up to pay for competition which will only benefit large users."

The association also called for assurances that safety will not be compromised. The spokeswoman added: "We worry that if you mix the water from different companies it would be more difficult to trace the source of any germ or bug that might get into the system."

The proposal announced in a consultative document by John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, fell far short of expectations raised in comments by the Prime Minister at the weekend.

The plan will allow companies using an annual 250 megalitres - each megalitre is 250,000 gallons - to buy water from a

supplier other than their local company. The water would be delivered through the existing suppliers' pipelines under a "common carriage" arrangement. It extends very limited competition provisions which have been in place for about five years but which has yet to be taken up.

Mr Gummer said: "Competition is the best guarantee for consumers that they receive value for money, better services and lower prices."

He hopes to extend competition to other users "in the future". One City analyst dismissed the proposals as "an April Fool from Mr Gummer". He added: "I am not convinced that this talk of competition will actually change much."

Ofwat, the industry watchdog, said the proposals would potentially benefit "exceptionally" large users, probably about 600 to 700 companies a year.

A spokeswoman said: "The idea is have an evolutionary approach. The Government intends to extend it in due course but you are some time away from getting to domestic customers."

But she added that domestic consumers will not bear any extra costs. Ian Byatt, director-general of Ofwat, is looking at removing very large customers from the water firms' price caps, which would prevent firms shifting the balance of charges in favour of larger users.

Frank Dobson, Labour's environment spokesman, said: "These proposals do nothing about the fundamental failings of the privatised water industry, with its soaring prices, profits and bosses' pay and perks. It does nothing to stop the scandal of the leaks or the environmental damage of taking too much water from rivers and lakes during dry spells."



Wildlife heritage: Ministry of Agriculture officials survey a pond created by Andrew Cleaver on his farm at Chadlington, Oxfordshire, with a subsidy from the Countryside Stewardship scheme which is now run by MAFF. Photograph: Philip Meach

"You're not sure your health insurance will pay my bill, are you?"



To save money, a lot of people have bought budget health insurance schemes. Inevitably, this has meant compromising on the level of cover. Until now. Because Primecare, a new policy from Prime Health, actually provides comprehensive cover at a budget price.

So, if you're buying a policy, ask yourself: does it cover out-patient treatment, like specialist consultations? Does it give you immediate access to private treatment? Does it guarantee full payment of surgeons' and anaesthetists' fees? Will it pay for alternative medicine?

Primecare gives you all this, and we'll even give you an increasing scale of no-claims discounts up to 50%.

In fact we believe Primecare offers you, the customer, the best deal on the market.

Why not switch immediately? You can be covered the moment you contact our Customer Advisers. The number is 0800 77 99 55. Call now, because nothing is more important than your health.

Prime Health
A member of the Standard Life Group

Call Prime Health on 0800 77 99 55, or fill in the coupon.

Title _____ First name _____

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Surname _____ Date of birth _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone (inc. STD code) Day _____ Evening _____

Date of birth of the eldest person requiring cover _____

Cover required: Single ☐ Married ☐ Family ☐ Single parent family ☐

If you already have private medical insurance please state renewal date _____

Please post to (no stamp required) Prime Health Limited, FREEPOST, SK 3042 Stockport, Cheshire SK2 6YG.

M02 002 NG

Soviet spy sued for profits of his 'betrayal'

The Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, yesterday took Soviet spy George Blake to the High Court to try to recover £90,000 he made from a book about his years with MI6.

Blake, who now lives in poverty in Moscow, after escaping from Wormwood Scrubs prison in 1961, turned down an offer to appear personally to defend himself.

He declined to offer any defence but is being represented by Lord Lester QC, who is also appearing for his London publishers, Jonathan Cape, in a parallel action brought by the Attorney General.

Mr Philip Havers QC, representing the Attorney General, told the Vice Chancellor, Sir Richard Scott, that Blake had broken his trust with the security and intelligence services by writing the book, *No Other Choice*, which deals with Blake's time with MI6 between 1947 and 1961, displayed a "flagrant disregard" of his duties, from which he had "unjustly" made money, said Mr Havers.

He said that although there was no breach of confidence - Blake had already told the

Russian authorities all the secrets he knew - a fiduciary duty remained.

Because the information had been passed to the Russians, it could no longer be regarded as confidential, said Mr Havers. It was a breach of confidentiality in that Blake had broken the trust of the security services. Therefore, the correct remedy would be for the Crown to take any profits he had made.

Jonathan Cape, who are not defending the action, hold the profits of the book, which have been frozen since publication in 1991.

Blake, 73, who was responsible for the deaths of several British agents, received a £35,000 advance for the book he wrote in Moscow.

Lord Lester, appointed by the Crown to look after Blake's interests, said that if the former security officer was prevented from publishing a story about his life because he was employed by the Crown, then ministers should be subject to the same code and stopped from publishing their memoirs.

The hearing was adjourned until today.

DAILY POEM

The Moon Over London

By David Gascoyne

Last night a woman's veil
Above the city drifting like a bar
Or some lost wing of smoke
By hateful influences was rent in twain
Predicting ruin for the denizens below

Out of its house of cerulean shell
The twin-breasted eclipse
Released its venom on the world
And poured its quick-tongued vapours
on our sleep
While dire hounds howled on Hampstead Hill.

Then sighed the half-extinguished torch:
'Aversion of the violence foretold
Is in the courage of the weak
To brace the breaking rock
And cut adrift the tethered keel of Time.'

David Gascoyne was born in 1916 and published his first volume of poems as a schoolboy in 1932. The following year he visited Paris, coming into contact with writers and painters of the Surrealist movement such as André Breton and Louis Aragon, and publishing his own account, *A Short Survey of Surrealism*, in 1935. He was one of the few British poets to be strongly influenced by the movement, although its impact was also felt by Lawrence Durrell and Dylan Thomas. This poem, written before 1940, appears in *Nineties Poetry: Winter 1995-96* published by the Lansdowne Press at £4.95.

CAR INSURANCE

Looking for the **LOWEST** premium?



Exclusive Road Atlas **FREE** with every quote

PHONE **FREE**
0500 333 600

TO QUALIFY FOR YOUR FREE ROAD ATLAS PLEASE QUOTE REF 4850

LINES ARE OPEN 9am-8pm WEEKDAYS 9am-2pm SATURDAYS



Backed by one of the UK's leading insurers covering over 10 million motorists. Dial Direct Insurance Services Ltd. is a member of the National Insurance and Credit Corporation plc. Not available in Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands.

Fullit pu
ace on

Bruce still in do

Montgomerie

SHOWS start of

WHERE ARE THEY NOW



April 2015

Teachers' conference: Problem of discipline highlighted

Staff demand support over pupil attacks

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

Nine out of ten teachers say that school discipline is deteriorating, according to a survey published yesterday.

Headteachers and the police are failing to offer staff the support they need to deal with the problem, says the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, which opened the classroom unions annual conference season in Torquay, Devon, yesterday.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, will address the conference today, saying that schools should be given greater powers to exclude violent pupils, and difficult children should be sent to special units for up to a term.

The 150,000-strong association surveyed its branch secretaries in 71 local authorities. Half said that discipline was a worse problem than 15 years ago, and a further 35 per cent said it was much worse.

There were 293 assaults on teachers in the past year in 28 areas where detailed records were kept. Staff were worried about threats to their safety from pupils, parents and intruders.

Peter Smith, general secretary of the association, said many schools swept incidents under the carpet because of fears that they might be marked down as having discipline problems. The police were often reluctant to use their powers to prosecute offenders, he added. Teachers were having to turn to their unions to help them and to lobby

by politicians on their behalf.

"We are talking about flick-knives being thrown at teachers, teachers being head-butted by irate parents. We are talking about intruders coming onto school premises and causing mayhem," he said.

Most of the branch secretaries surveyed blamed a deterioration in society for the indiscipline, while others cited poor adult role models, large classes and failures in the law.



Galina O'Connor: Left school after attack by boy, nine

One teacher who had had to take early retirement after an attack by a pupil, said in a statement yesterday that it seemed children could do no wrong.

"Could the theorists explain just what ought to be done about a boy of eight who puts a stick in dog's mess and puts it in a younger boy's mouth? It is considered a basic human right to be a nuisance and get away with it," he said.

Another teacher, Galina O'Connor, 58, had to leave her job at a north London primary after receiving back injuries while trying to restrain a pupil.

The boy, nine, a refugee from Zaire, had previously kicked her and attacked fellow pupils, she said. But she had been advised by her deputy head to give in to demands from the boy for easier work, more praise, priority access to the computer and the right to sit wherever he wanted.

The boy was not excluded from Woodcroft primary, in Barnet, though he left soon afterwards to move to another borough. Mrs O'Connor received compensation of £2,500.

"My life is absolutely ruined," she said yesterday.

A spokesman for Barnet council said it had never accepted that the boy had intentionally attacked Mrs O'Connor and that its compensation payment was without prejudice.

Mr Blunkett will criticise limits on school exclusions. At present, schools can exclude a child for up to 15 days or expel them permanently. Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education, is reviewing the limits.

Labour wants to see disruptive pupils sent to properly run special referral units. Some of these units already exist but they have been criticised by inspectors for poor quality teaching.

Mr Blunkett said yesterday: "Discipline is crucial, both in terms of educating young people who... are disruptive, and for the education of the children in the class and the school."



Carrying on the line: The latest member of the Prices' £25 racing dynasty with her mother

Photograph: Peter Lea

Foal is born to run for farmhouse racing dynasty

RICHARD SMITH

A horse-racing dynasty built on just £25 has moved into its fifth generation with the birth of a foal to follow in the hoof-steps of a string of champions.

Tom Price and his family have built on the initial £25 outlay by his father for a mare

called Cottage Lass II in 1952 to create one of the most successful lines in National Hunt history, winning 100 races between them.

Most famous was Flakey Dove - who won the 1993 Champion Hurdle and picked up more than £200,000

during her career. Yesterday the Prices welcomed the fifth generation when Flakey Dove gave birth to her first foal at their 400-acre farm near Leominster, Hereford and Worcester.

The father of the bay filly is the Ascot Gold Cup winner, Le Moss, and Mr Price, who shares the farm with his wife, Mary,

and their three sons, hopes they may have another winner.

Mr Price, 72, said: "We are just country Johnnies and all our dreams have come true - anything extra will be a bonus."

"I have never gambled and even now I still can't believe all the success we have enjoyed - it's beyond me." However, while

mares like Red Dove - who produced 38 winners - and Shady Dove were simply sent to the nearest available stallion, the Prices are flying higher with Flakey Dove. After producing the new foal, Flakey Dove is this summer to visit Terimon, who finished runner-up in the Derby.

'Scanda' of 600 schools with outside toilets

More than 600 primary schools still have outside toilets, according to a survey published yesterday. And for more than 700,000 children the classroom is a temporary hut - some over 40 years old and falling apart.

The findings come from a survey by local authorities pressing for more money to carry out essential repair and maintenance of school buildings.

A survey seven years ago by the Audit Commission said local education authorities needed £2bn for school repairs. The current survey, carried out by the Association of County Councils and Association of Metropolitan Authorities, puts the figure at £3.2bn.

Saxon Spence, Labour edu-

cation chairwoman of the ACC, said the figures were a scandal. Government restrictions on LEA borrowing meant money for maintenance was declining. "It is not untypical for a large education authority with 500 schools to have an annual allocation of only £200,000 for this type of work," the report said.

"We've been telling the Government year after year this problem is getting worse," Mrs Spence said. The Government told LEAs to sell buildings and land to raise money. But there was little left to sell. Ministers told them to look for money in revenue budgets and financial reserves, Mrs Spence said. But these were being squeezed by successive spending cuts. And

finally, they were urged to look to private investment. But only a minority of projects - like dual-use sports facilities - offered any financial return.

As a result, children spent their days in inadequate, sometimes dangerous buildings. "Some of these temporary buildings are OK. But some are literally falling apart," Mrs Spence said.

"After the dreadful tragedy in Dunblane, schools are now being urged to have one entrance that can be easily controlled," said Mrs Spence. "When schools are increasingly made up of collections of temporary huts, that is practically impossible."

Liberal Democrat education spokesman Don Foster described the situation as a disgrace.

Exclusive Sony offer. 6 months Free line rental.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER
SONY CM-R111K
£4.99
INC. VAT

FREE CONNECTION TO
VODAFONE LOWCALL
WITH NO TARIFF INCREASES
GUARANTEED FOR LIFE

Monthly Rental	£15 (£12.77 + VAT)
Peak Rate Calls	50p per min (42.5p + VAT)
UK Wide	20p per min (17p + VAT)

Peak times 8.00-19.30 Mon to Fri
Mandatory billing charged
Monthly in advance. Line rental
at £1.77 inc VAT per month. Line rental
(debit) monthly in advance and anytime
charges will be added to your nominated
credit charge or Debit card. Calls charged in
units of 30 seconds after the first minute.

GUARANTEED PEACE OF MIND
Your phone is covered by our 14 days
no quibble money back promise.

The most comprehensive
after sales package available
includes:
1 Year Parts & Labour Guarantee
24 Hour Customer Care Line
Call Day repair from Sony
With a 24h service
Collect & Repair service
30 Day Repair Service Guarantee

SONY IS THE TRADEMARK OF THE SONY CORPORATION, JAPAN

ORDER NOW WITH YOUR CREDIT CARD DETAILS FOR FREE DELIVERY IN 4 WORKING DAYS

FREEPHONE 0500 000 888
CREDIT CARD ORDERING HOTLINE WEEKDAYS 9AM TO 5PM WEEKENDS 9AM TO 6PM

PLEASE HAVE YOUR CREDIT CARD AND THIS ADVERTISEMENT HANDY WHEN YOU CALL.
AND QUOTE REF 0500. (SOME ARE UNABLE TO ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS)
Offer subject to status and a standard terms contract for each phone with Cellphones Direct Ltd, 185 Lower Richmond Road, Richmond-upon-Thames TW9 4LX.
Full written details and terms and conditions of this offer are available on request. © Copyright. Registered No 2995222.



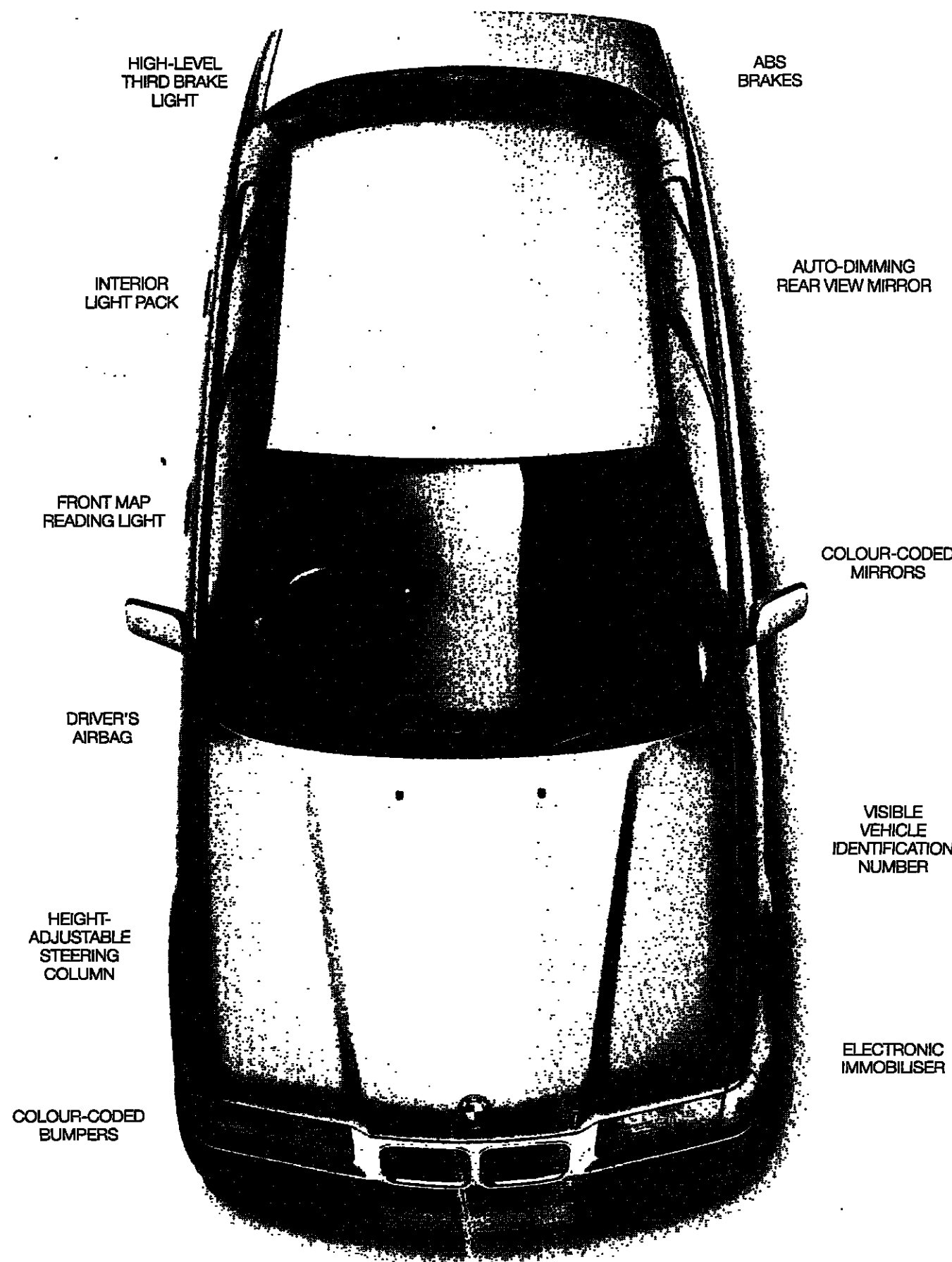
- EXCLUSIVE OFFER - a huge bargain on the UK's smallest phone. Only available from Cellphones Direct
- FREE LINE RENTAL - for 6 months - save £90 inc VAT
- FREE CONNECTION to Vodafone LowCall worth £35.25 inc VAT
- £139 RRP WORTH of genuine Sony accessories - Sony Remote Commander and Sony Earphone Microphone

SONY

MODEL CM-R111K.

- ◆ 9 speed dial memories ◆ 60 mins talk-time ◆ 14hrs standby-time ◆ Featherweight only 185g (6 1/2oz) ◆ Complete with charger and standard battery

Cellphones
direct



OTHER CARS DATE. THIS ONE UPDATES.

The BMW 3 Series has long been regarded as the benchmark in sports saloons.

Autocar sums it up admirably: "The BMW 3 Series continues to break fresh ground..."

One of the secrets of the model's lasting success is the continual upgrading of its standard specification.

And all in addition to such features as power-assisted steering, central locking, electric front windows, electric door mirrors

and exhaust catalysator. All of which have always been fitted as standard.

But is the comprehensively-upgraded 3 Series starting to sound just a little expensive?

In fact, the greatly enhanced equipment level notwithstanding, a BMW 316i at £16,530 actually costs £802 less in real terms than it would have done 5 years ago.

So, while breaking fresh ground, your new BMW won't be breaking the bank.

Please send details on: BMW 3 Series to BMW Select Finance Ltd,
To: BMW Information Service, PO Box 161, Croydon CR9 1QB;
Freephone 0800 325600. Internet: <http://www.bmw.co.uk>

Name	_____
Address	_____
Postcode	_____
Telephone	_____
Preferred Car Model/Colour	_____
Preferred Car Model/Colour	_____

THE ULTIMATE DRIVING MACHINE

BMW 3 SERIES PRICES START FROM £14,280 ON THE ROAD. MODEL SHOWN 316i AT £16,530. PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS AND INCLUDE VAT, ONE YEAR'S ROAD FUND LICENCE, DELIVERY AND HUBBARD PLATES. INDIVIDUALS MAY BE REQUIRED. AUTOCAR 20 12 95

news

Hedge gets chop in feud that divided neighbours for 18 years

An 18-year battle over a garden hedge took a decisive turn yesterday when one of the combatants was given the go-ahead to lop nearly 20ft off its height.

The hedge – a row of 10 Leylandii fir trees – in the Bournville area of Birmingham, had grown to a height of 30 ft, and Michael Jones, 67, and his wife, Maureen, have been complaining for years that it was blocking their light.

The trees belong to the Jones's neighbour, 88-year-old Charles Stanton, but despite a succession of court cases estimated to cost around £100,000, he has refused to allow them to be pruned.

Yesterday Mr Stanton remained behind locked doors. A cardboard coffin was placed outside his home with the epitaph: "RIP My Lovely Trees, whose gentle green mantle has so nobly softened my gaze against the ugly reality beyond."

Mr Stanton planted the hedge in 1971 as soon as the Joneses moved in. Trouble flared in 1978 when Mr Jones claimed the hedge was too tall at 20 ft and blocked his light.

Following three court cases, including one at the High Court in London, a Birmingham County Court judge ruled Mr Jones could prune the trees to open "reasonable" height. Mr

Stanton was ordered to pay costs of up to £70,000, but he has vowed to continue fighting.

In the course of the battle, Mr Stanton's son, Paul, has been convicted of assaulting Mr Jones, papers on the case fill three bulging files and the wrangle has even been debated on *Gardeners' Question Time*.

The row also made history when a court was obliged to deliver a legal definition of a hedge: "A number of woody plants, whether capable of growing into trees or not, which are so planted after being tended together as to form both screen and barrier."

Mrs Jones said as the trees were lopped: "I'm obviously overjoyed. It's just beyond my comprehension how can anybody be so nasty as to want to stop someone seeing the blue sky and winter sun."

The Jones's problems may not be over, however. Mr Jones explained: "Beyond this hedge we have the problem of a second hedge of trees. In three years' time I know this second hedge will be a nuisance."

The former Labour minister, Lord Howell, is backing the Jones's fight for new laws to give householders the right to control neighbours' hedges and to stop unnecessary litigation.



Chainsaw massacre: A forester gets to work on the hedge. Reducing its height from 30ft to 12ft took more than three hours Photograph: Newsteam

Motorist jailed over attack

A road rage motorist, who has been repeatedly convicted of attacking women after losing his temper at the wheel, was yesterday jailed for six months and banned from driving for two years.

Paul Erkiert, 41, from Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire, who was said in court to "have a problem with his temper", was told he was a dangerous man on the roads. Judge Laurence Marshall told Erkiert, who admitted assault: "On this crowded island we have to live with others and accept their imperfections."

"You have on a number of occasions attacked women because you have been annoyed with their driving or because they have complained about your driving. You have been given lenient sentences in the past but the time has come for people to be protected from you."

Luton Crown Court was told that Erkiert's past convictions included a conditional discharge for an almost identical offence: being fined for common assault and being fined for criminal damage.

Jail 'sent woman to court in nightdress'

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Holloway prison "degraded" a woman by sending her to court wearing only her "nightie and negligee", a scathing report into the country's largest women's jail has revealed.

News that the prison has shut the voluntary clothing service, leaving many inmates – particularly the mentally ill, homeless and foreign nationals – without basic necessities such as shoes and underwear, is the latest scandal to hit the troubled prison.

It comes in the annual report of the jail's Board of Visitors, which paints a picture of a management on the point of collapse, with demotivated staff, running a squalid jail with some inmates being locked in their cells for 20 hours a day. Poor health care, lack of education

and activities and an increase in drug-related bullying and assault are condemned in the report, which calls on the Home Secretary for action and assurances.

The prison in north London last hit the headlines, when the new Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, walked out in disgust at the infestation of rats, cockroaches and lice and "overzealous" security – in particular the use of manacles and chains on pregnant and seriously ill women attending hospital. He has still not returned to the jail to complete the inspection.

The ensuing outcry eventually forced an about-turn by the Government over the use of shackles on pregnant women – concerns also raised by the Board of Visitors. It also reveals that large amounts of inmates' cash went missing from regis-

tered post going in and out of the troubled prison. And that some inmates were locked in their cells for such prolonged periods over weekends that they could not bath or shower.

The board believes that lack of purposeful regime was profoundly damaging to the ethos of the prison and to the lives of inmates, concludes the report. "It is demeaning, inhumane and damaging to mental and physical health to keep women isolated and locked in their cells with little respite."

But it acknowledges that there have been some major improvements since January, when Mike Sheldrick became the new governor.

Sources suggested that five bin bags full of rats were carried out of jail, grass is now growing over the "rat runs", and the filth has been cleared. Women are

not being locked in cells for such long periods and new senior medical staff have improved health facilities within the jail.

But concerns remain about the plight of teenagers, the mentally ill and Category A high-risk offenders. Furthermore, there is still no clothing provision at the jail for the foreign, homeless and mentally ill women, among its 500-plus population. "It is a fundamental right of women to be decently clothed. It is basic to justice that they should be well presented for court appearances," the report says. It is deplorable that management has been unable to provide for this.

Rachel Palmer, the outgoing chairman said: "The complex needs of Holloway and the female population were not fully understood. Help was too little and too late."

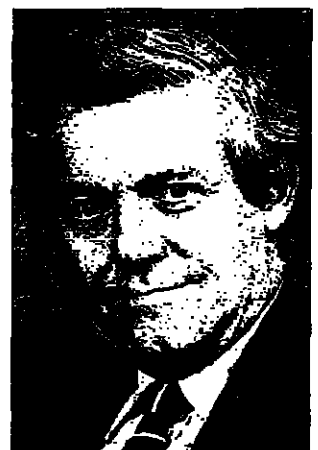
Governors give warm welcome to new prison service chief

HEATHER MILLS
Home Affairs Correspondent

Richard Tilt, the man called upon five months ago to run the Prison Service in the wake of Derek Lewis's controversial sacking, was yesterday formally appointed to the post of Director General – on about half the salary of his predecessor.

Mr Tilt, 52, will earn £77,000, the salary of a Grade 2 civil servant, with performance pay up to an estimated £5,000. Derek Lewis, the first businessman lured in from industry to try turn the troubled service around under its new "agency" status, earned £125,000 with up to £35,000 in annual bonuses.

As a former prison governor, Mr Tilt's appointment has delighted both governors and staff in the country's 136 jails. They had viewed the appointment of Mr Lewis, a former television executive with neither government nor prison experience, as



Richard Tilt: Changed his mind about taking the job

a costly and failed experiment. Last week, Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, conceded he would pay up to £200,000 to settle Mr Lewis's claim for unfair dismissal after a damaging prison escape inquiry.

But there was no initial decision by ministers to resort to "in-house" appointments. In the five months since Mr Lewis's sacking, informal approaches were made to people like Andrew Foster, controller of the Audit Commission, to see if they would be interested. Further, head-hunting agencies told the Home Office that Mr Howard's treatment of Mr Lewis made it unlikely that the post would be able to attract high-quality candidates from outside the service.

Mr Tilt himself, although commanding the respect of all prison staff, was also initially reluctant to stand for the job – widely regarded as a poisoned chalice. But his success over the past five months has both changed his mind and convinced ministers that he is the man for what they accept is a very difficult job.

Last night, David Roddan, general secretary of the Prison

Governors' Association said: "We are delighted at this news. We have long campaigned to have a head of the service who has personal experience of running prisons. Mr Tilt has this and he will enjoy the full confidence of prison governors in this country."

Yesterday, Mr Howard, who made the announcement in a Commons written reply, said: "Richard Tilt has done an excellent job as Acting Director General. I have every confidence that he will provide the service with the leadership it needs."

Mr Howard said he also proposed to establish a Prison Service Advisory Board to advise on the performance and plans of the service. Mr Tilt's 30-year career in the Prison Service has included governing both Gartree and Wakefield Prisons, as well as being a regional manager and, most recently, director of services and custody.

Railtrack Shares
will be arriving soon.

Your first stop
is Barclays.



The Government's sale of Railtrack Shares is underway.

As interest gathers momentum it's important to catch your Shares from the right platform: The Barclays Share Shop.

We have a long and proven track record for reliability and professionalism, so needless to say, registering to buy Shares is quick and easy. Wait too long, however and you could miss out on the Government's incentive, which is only available to those who register through a Share Shop.

To register, phone free on 0800 000 333. The lines are open between 8 am - 10 pm weekdays, or 10 am - 3 pm weekends (excluding Bank Holidays), or stop off at any Barclays branch.

Individuals who register with, and duly apply through, a Share Shop in the UK Public Offer will receive greater preference in allocation, on a basis to be determined, than members of the public who do not register with and apply through a Share Shop, if there is a heavy demand for Shares. This advertisement is issued by, and is the responsibility solely of, Barclays Stockbrokers Limited, which is acting as a Share Shop and a Retail Tender Broker in relation to the Railtrack Share Offer. A Share Shop making an application for Shares on your behalf, and a Retail Tender Broker acting for you, in the Offer will be acting as your agent and neither a Share Shop nor a Retail Tender Broker has authority to act for the Secretary of State for Transport or any other person. Shares will be sold by the Secretary of State in the Offer solely on the basis of information contained in the Prospectus to be issued in connection with the Offer. Registrants may receive marketing literature from Barclays Stockbrokers Limited.

BARCLAYS

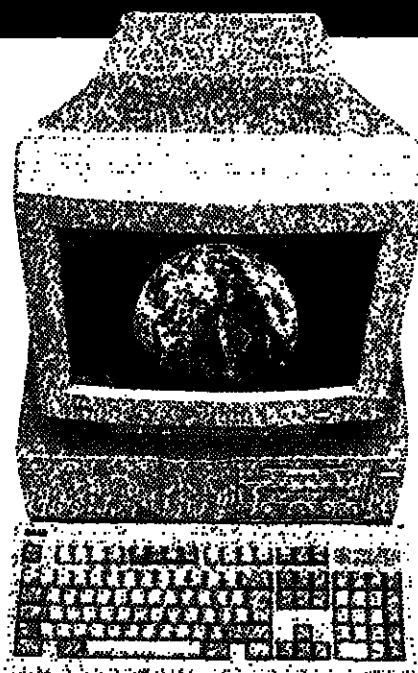
BARCLAYS STOCKBROKERS LIMITED

Barclays Bank PLC is regulated by IMRO. Barclays Stockbrokers Limited is a member of the London Stock Exchange, regulated by SFI and a subsidiary of Barclays PLC. Registered in England. Reg. No. 1986161. Reg. Office: 54 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3AH.

Better spec. Better price. Better hurry.

- INTEL® 120MHz PENTIUM® PROCESSOR
- 16Mb EDO RAM
- 256Kb PIPELINE BURST CACHE
- 1Gb HARD DRIVE
- INTEGRATED 64-BIT PCI LOCAL BUS VIDEO WITH 2Mb VIDEO MEMORY
- 15" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR
- 4 PCI AND 3 ISA EXPANSION SLOTS (1 SHARED)
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- SIX SPEED CD-ROM DRIVE
- MICROSOFT® OFFICE PROFESSIONAL 95
- MICROSOFT WINDOWS 95
- DELL MOUSE/KEYBOARD

£1,399 (£1,673.20
incl. delivery + VAT)



Designed for
Microsoft
Windows 95

With Dell, things just get better and better. For a limited period only, we're offering our Dimension® P120t for the unbelievably low price of £1,399 (£1,673.20 incl. delivery and VAT). Charged by a 120MHz Pentium® Processor it gives you all the power you need, making it the ultimate high spec, high performance Ready-to-Run machine. It also comes complete with Microsoft® Office Professional 95 and Microsoft Windows 95. But to take advantage of this incredible offer you must act now. Call us today on 01344 724769 and get a better PC for your money.

DELL
DIRECT

01344 724769

Dell is a registered trademark of the Dell Computer Corporation Ltd 1992. Intel, Intel Inside, Pentium are trademarks or registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. Microsoft, Windows, Office Professional 95 and the Windows logo are registered trademarks of the Microsoft Corporation. Delivery is charged at £25 + VAT per system. Prices correct as 25.3.96. Dell Digital is offered (subject to terms) to businesses trading 1 year or more. The photographed product may not always match the specifications in this advert. Prices quoted refer to specifications described only. The prices listed reflect the substandard availability or any price of going to press. Prices change frequently. All prices and specifications are subject to change without prior notice or obligation. In compliance with other manufacturers' warranties are included using the Dell logo and are not available for a limited period only.

01344 724769



Hollywood reflections: Swirling skirts of backless gown in Bob Mackie's New York show Photograph: Sheridan Morley

Movie setting for time-warp show

TAMM BLANCHARD
Fashion Editor

A Twenties time warp seems to have trapped the New York designers this season. Hollywood wardrobes have been resurrected and thrift shops ransacked for stock to copy.

Bob Mackie, the designer who put Cher in the infamous black cobweb dress for the Oscars in 1986, launched his new evening collection on Sunday. These were glamorous clothes column dresses with Art Deco detailing and beading — for society women to wear to cocktail parties and formal so-

cial engagements. Prices go up to \$3,000 (about £2,000).

The show was held at the candlelit Laura Bell's supper club and was like a scene from a Forties movie. The clothes were pure showbiz glamour with a bit of Las Vegas thrown in. The Californian designer's roots are in Hollywood where he worked at Paramount and then for television as the costume designer for *The Judy Garland Show* in the Sixties and *The Sonny and Cher Comedy Hour*.

Mackie's clients include Cher and Madonna, newscaster Carol Burnett, actress Carol Channing — and the drag queen Ru

Paul who turned up for the show dressed as a man in a sombre suit and no hint of mascara.

Anna Sui, the wacky Downtown designer, showed an autumn/winter 96 collection on Sunday evening with references to both the Sixties and the Twenties with cloche hats, Ultra-suede coats with tie belts, distressed leather jackets worn with sensible tweed, and the sort of clothes that would look like secondhand tat to anyone but the initiated.

After the thrift stores and flea markets, Sui turned to what she called "eccentric English" and cast her eye over the clothes of

Vivienne Westwood. Windowpane checks were made up into trouser suits, Miss Marple skirts and jackets that showed just how little originality the New York designers have.

Even the evening wear — beaded flapper dresses with handkerchief hems — was lifted from Twenties originals. And why buy Anna Sui when you can still buy antique dresses with all their fine craftsmanship at a fraction of the price of Sui's?

ST. JOSEPHS HOSPICE

MARE ST. LONDON E84SA
(Charity Ref. No. 231232)

An Easter Message

Throughout the bleak winter, the last for many in our care, the warmth of your compassion was beyond mortal praise. May your kindness be blessed by peace and good health during Easter and all seasons.

Sister Superior.

Why

do buses seem to travel in threes?



Discover this story and lots more at the London Transport Museum

Museum shop and cafe
Open daily 10.00-18.00
(Friday 11.00-18.00)



London Transport Museum
Covent Garden
0171-836 8557

Fraud charge PC is found dead in forest

A policeman cleared seven years ago of murdering his wife in Portugal has been found dead in a fume-filled car.

Constable Alan Waldock, 41, was due to appear before a Northumbria court tomorrow charged in connection with a £13,000 credit card fraud.

His body was discovered early on Sunday morning on a deserted track deep in the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire. It is understood that Gloucestershire police have found a number of notes. A post-mortem examination was due to be carried out yesterday.

Relatives, including PC Waldock's 13-year-old son, Christopher, were said to have been shocked by his death.

Inspector Dean Walker, of Gloucestershire Police, said police officers found the constable in his car on an isolated track in the forest.

The inspector added: "He was discovered in an Austin Metro car which we believe was his. We cannot say what the cause of death was until the results of a post-mortem examination are released. But there are no suspicious circumstances."

The Gloucestershire and Northumbria forces have

launched a joint investigation into his death.

Last month PC Waldock, who was suspended from duty with the Northumbria force, was accused of 10 deception charges at Morpeth police station.

PC Waldock had earlier hit the headlines when he was charged with killing his wife, Doris, 33, while they were holidaying in Faro, in the Algarve, Portugal, in 1988.

Mrs Waldock had drowned in a whirlpool bath at the couple's time-share villa at the Vale Navio holiday complex.

The court in Faro decided she slipped and banged her head.

Her husband, who had always protested his innocence, was acquitted of her murder after a 12-day trial which attracted world-wide media attention.

In August 1990, a coroner recorded an open verdict on Mrs Waldock's death.

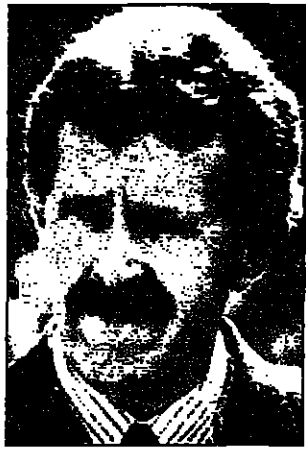
Four years ago, PC Waldock and his son moved from the Northumbria area to Cinderford in Gloucestershire, where they set up home with a woman he had met while on holiday in Jersey, but he continued to work for Northumbria police.

Last year, PC Waldock was arrested at a relative's house in Northumbria. He was detained at a police station for questioning over allegations relating to the use of a number of credit cards.

He was suspended from the Northumbria force in July 1995 during an investigation into the allegations and was eventually charged to appear before South-East Northumbria magistrates at Bedlington, tomorrow. Before his suspension PC Waldock had been based at Clifford Street, Byker, where he worked part-time in the central operations control room.

PC Waldock's former brother-in-law Detective Sergeant Alan Barber, an officer with Northumbria fraud squad, said yesterday that news of his father's death had left Christopher distressed and in a state of shock.

He added: "Christopher has been through a lot after the death of his mother. He was in the care of my parents while Alan Waldock was in jail in Portugal. But he went back to live with his father after he was cleared of the murder. Christopher loved both his parents."



Alan Waldock, who was cleared of killing his wife Doris (above)



Dispute hits shipping forecasts

LOUISE JURY

Coastguard leaders may go to court in the next round of a dispute which is disrupting the shipping forecasts broadcast daily on BBC Radios 3 and 4.

The Public Services Tax and Commerce Union is taking advice on the legality of plans by the Coastguard Agency to end special payments to coastguards who have provided readings of weather conditions at coastal stations from Tiree to Malin Head since 1949. Staff at 15 stations have stopped supplying the information in protest.

Under an informal arrangement, the work has been done voluntarily, ostensibly in coastguards' own time, after training, again in their own time, at the Meteorological Office's training college near Reading.

Volunteers receive payments of between £200 and £800 a year from the Met Office for supplying readings of wind direction and speed, visibility, pressure and general weather conditions. The Met Office is happy with the present arrangement.

But the Coastguard Agency, which buys back some of the information for seafarers, has decided it is illogical. It claims

the work is part of the coastguards' duty and therefore any Met Office payment should come to the agency.

A spokeswoman said: "We are paying the Meteorological Office back for the information collected by our own staff during their working day which does not make sense."

However, Dutch Holland, chairman of the coastguards' section of the Public Services Tax and Commerce Union, said that the arrangement had been "established custom and practice" which the Coastguard Agency was seeking to overturn because it was kept short of cash

by the Department of Transport.

"We are seeking advice on the legality of these actions with a view to challenging the decision in court. Our belief is that the agreement is between the individual officer and the Met Office. The coastguards are very, very angry over this."

A Met Office spokesman said the protest was unfortunate but did not affect forecasting. It simply meant that the conditions at those stations, which were normally read out at the end of shipping forecast on Radio 4 and the end of the inshore forecasts on Radio 3, were being omitted.



You're used to successful meetings. So are we.

Conference Partner

Manchester Reading

and more than 70 hotels worldwide

Ramada Hotels

For further information call your professional conference organiser or 01293 82 41 24 during normal office hours

IF ORANGE HAD SOLD YOU THIS NEWSPAPER YOU'D ONLY HAVE THE FIRST 10 PAGES.

60

minutes maximum for £29.98 on talk 60*

orange

125

MINUTES MAXIMUM FOR £26.44 ON REGULAR CALLER PLUS*

CELLNET

RING 0800 21 4000 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

THE NET THAT SETS YOU FREE.



*Based on equivalent recommended tariffs. 125 mins max of off-peak calls. Minutage reduces when peak-time calls are made. Telecom Securitor Cellular Radio.

Just what schools need from their personal computing.

A more uniform approach.

Today, Apple and Acorn launch a new joint venture called Xemplar Education.

The new company's sole objective will be to serve the needs of UK schools.

Xemplar will provide tailored computing solutions for primary, secondary and special schools and draw on the considerable strengths of the parent companies.

Whilst Apple delivers the research and development muscle of the world's leading provider of computers in education, Acorn brings its own powerful technologies and breadth of curriculum solutions to the new venture.

With a commitment to the future and an eye on the past, Xemplar will not only ensure greater integration between today's Macintosh™ and Acorn platforms, but provide a clear path for the future of computing in UK schools.

Everyone stands to benefit, from students and teachers, to IT managers and administrators.

Which means Xemplar will offer the UK's schools something they thought was impossible — a uniform policy that's universally popular.

For more information about Xemplar Education, call 01223 724200.

Apple 

X E M P L A R

E D U C A T I O N

Acorn 

Backbench sniping holds up divorce bill

COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

The Government was forced to delay the next stage of the controversial Family Law Bill last night as Tory rebels said they would try to defeat key parts of the reforms to divorce.

The Lord Chancellor's Office had to postpone the committee stage of the Bill, due today, after the Government decided to rush emergency anti-terrorism legislation through the Commons. Ministers denied they were retreating.

The delay was welcomed by the Bill's opponents, who believe they can use the postponement to build up opposition to the measure.

Edward Leigh, a minister who was sacked by John Major, is leading the Commons campaign against the measure with other right-wing senior Conservative backbench MPs: Dame Jill Knight, John Patten, the former education secretary and John Redwood, the leadership challenger.

They tabled amendments to the Bill yesterday to tighten grounds for divorce by insisting on fault-based divorce and doubling the proposed cooling-off period to two years before a divorce can go through.

The Government has already given way to opponents by allowing a free vote on key sections. It expects to be able to win with Labour support but yesterday's delay heartened those opposed to the measure.

Mr Leigh said he was confident he could win support from ministers and a large group of backbenchers unhappy with the changes planned by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, in the Family Law Bill.

The measure seeks to introduce no-fault divorces for the

first time and to give couples a 12-month cooling-off period before they can sign a statement leading to a final divorce.

One amendment, insisting on guilt being considered, would require the court to be satisfied that one of the parties had committed adultery and that they had lived apart for a continuous period of at least a year; or that one of the parties had behaved in an intolerable way; or that they had lived apart for at least two years.

Other amendments would increase the cooling-off period to 18 months or two years where one party did not consent to the divorce or where there were children under 16.

Mr Leigh said: "It sends out the wrong message to young people embarking on the most important decision of their lives. If you have no fault, you are signing a contract which is meaningless."

Middle-aged women who have spent a long time raising a family will be told they are being ejected from their marriage without reasons.

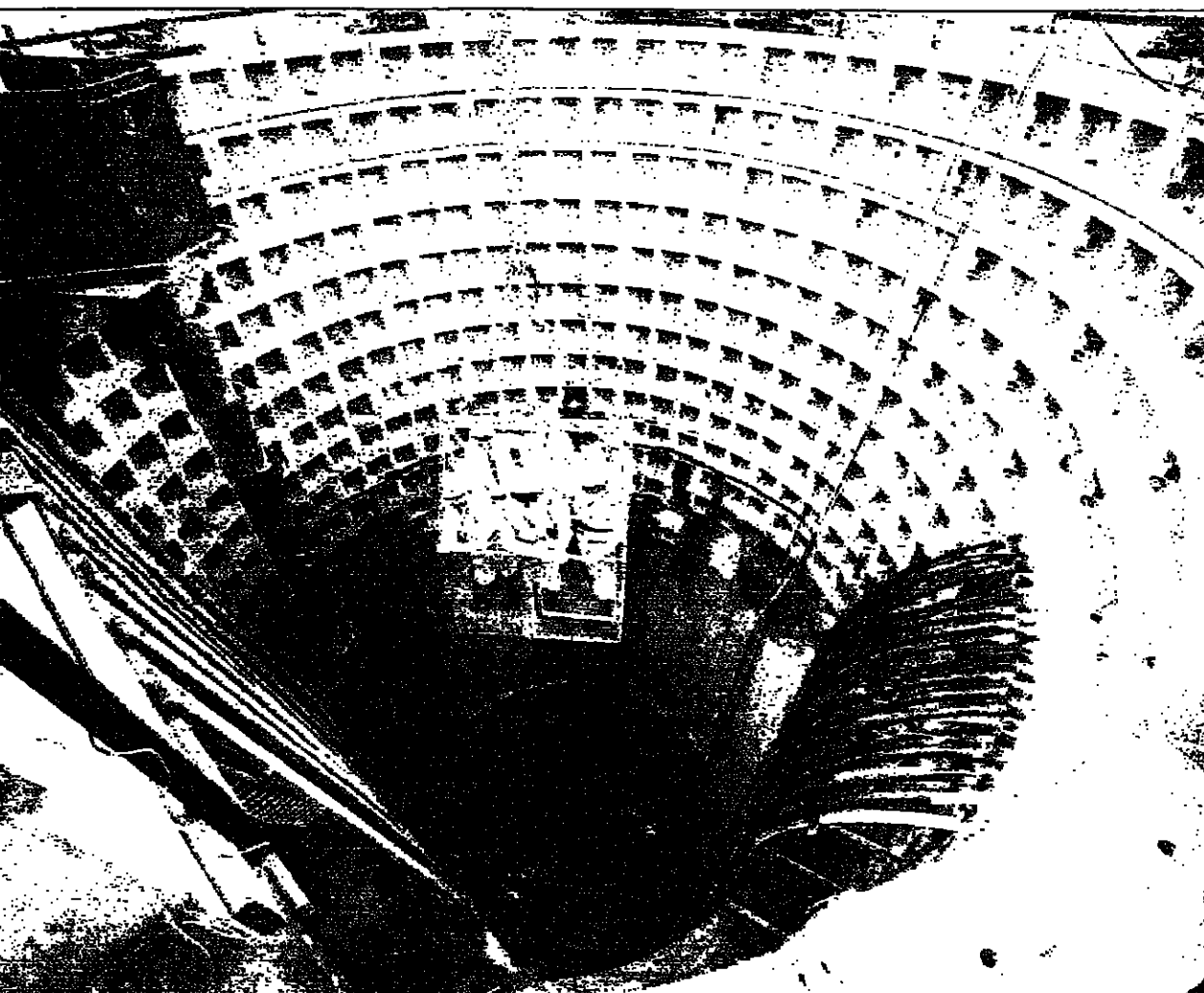
The Government insists the Bill strengthens the institution of marriage and the cooling-off period will slow down divorces, giving couples more chance to settle their differences.

Mr Leigh said there was growing support for his proposals from Christian family groups and that some ministers could back him in the lobbies.

The Bill was opposed in the Lords by the peers' former Conservative leader, Baroness Young, who is concerned about the effect of marriage breakdown on children.

The Government relied on the backing of Labour's front bench and will do so again when the Bill is debated after the Easter Recess.

Minister investigates tunnel vision for the capital's consumers



Going underground: The Energy minister Tim Eggar is lowered into the top of a 10-km electricity cable tunnel yesterday. The link, built by London Electricity, runs under the Thames from Wimbledon to Pimlico. Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Sceptics attack Major on fish

STEPHEN GOODWIN

John Major yesterday came in for further sniping from Tory Euro-sceptics who believe he failed to take a sufficiently tough line at the Turin European summit on fishing rights and the single currency. Reporting to MPs on the outcome of the meeting - marking the start of the Inter-Governmental Conference on the workings of the EU - the Prime Minister was also pressed over the possibility of a referendum on a single currency.

With the Cabinet expected to discuss the divisive poll tomorrow, senior Conservative Tim Rathbone said many Tories supported Mr Major's initial view that referenda were "not at all part of robust parliamentary procedures".

The Prime Minister said he did not think anything was remotely likely to come out of the IGC that could justify a referendum.

He said: "The one area where I think there may possibly be a case for a referendum is in the case of any decision taken to join a single currency, since that clearly isn't a matter that is likely to be determined before a general election."

Meanwhile Tory Eurosceptics

pointed up the absence from Mr Major's statement of any reference to reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, on which the Government had promised to act, and they questioned the lack of opposition to monetary union.

John Redwood, the former Welsh secretary, complained of "daily damage" to the British fishing industry and urged the Government to consider unilateral action if it failed to get support for reform from other EU states.

Mr Major said opting out of the CFP would not be in the interests of the industry. "The great danger of that would be that in a measurably short period of years the fish would be so overfished that there would be no fishing industry left."

Leading sceptic Bill Cash, Conservative MP for Stafford, drew attention to the Presidency conclusions from the summit, which reaffirms the EU's commitment to economic and monetary union, and asked if Mr Major intended to reject a single currency.

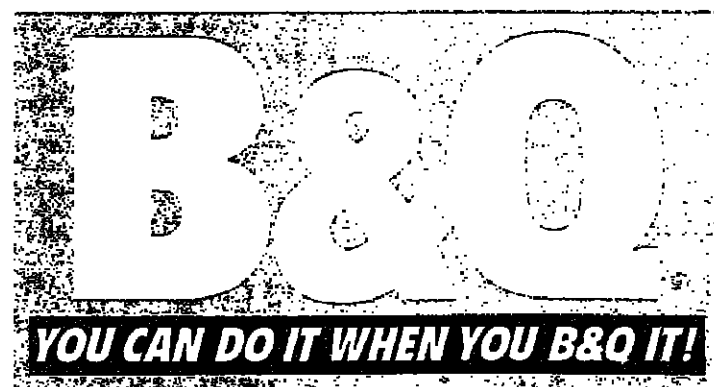
The Prime Minister explained that the single currency was being discussed in parallel to the IGC and he repeated his doubts that the 1999 deadline could be achieved.



NOW EARN TESCO CLUBCARD POINTS AT B&Q.

TESCO

Every little helps.



From today and until 30th September 1996 you'll earn 1 point for every £5 you spend as long as you spend £10 or more in one transaction. Excluding purchase of Gift Vouchers. Normal Tesco Clubcard rules apply. Pick up a leaflet in store.

DOES NOT APPLY IN B&Q WAREHOUSE OR B&Q DEPOT

THE INDEPENDENT

FREE on Thursday

16-page trial issue of **Classic CD magazine**

PRODUCED EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE INDEPENDENT

Classic CD

REVEALED
The best music of the year

AWARDS 96

Includes
discs and more
exciting CDs of the
year

PLUS
Yehudi Menuhin
Conducts at 100

FEATURING

Review of 1996 Classic CD
Profile of Yehudi Menuhin

Plus...

Save £5 on CDs at Virgin
Farringdon; Classic CD Subscriptions
offer worth £38

FREE IN THE INDEPENDENT
THIS THURSDAY

HOUSE INSURANCE

SAVE **50% OR MORE**
UP TO **50% OR MORE**

e.g. LONDON & HOME COUNTIES
£100,000 Buildings Sum Insured
Premium Only £154.00

LOWER Premiums in most Other Areas

Tel: 0181 546 1102 NOW!
Or phone your nearest branch at the local rate on
0345 123111

Hill House Hammond
Cutting The Cost Of Your Insurance

international

Yeltsin peace plan falls on deaf ears

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

President Boris Yeltsin's peace plan for Chechnya, seen as crucial to his chances of re-election in June, received a largely unenthusiastic response in Russia yesterday – on the ground it proved impossible to put a neat end to fighting at midnight.

Russian shelling eased after Mr Yeltsin appeared on television on Sunday to announce a unilateral ceasefire and partial withdrawal of troops. But in the small hours of yesterday morning, Muslim rebels ambushed an army unit in the south-eastern village of Vedeno, killing 28 servicemen and wounding 69.

Serving Russian soldiers said

they believed they would soon be fighting again. "The rebels have got used to the feel of a gun and are not going to give up that easily," said one conscript in Grozny. Another complained that the partial troop withdrawal would leave those who stayed behind "sitting ducks".

Among domestic politicians, the most charitable comment on the peace plan, which envisages parliamentary elections for the Caucasus and talks on possible autonomy but not independence, came from Sergei Yushenkov, a leading democrat, who said it was "undoubtedly positive although belated".

But the retired General Alexander Lebed, who plans to

challenge Mr Yeltsin for the presidency, dismissed the programme as a "pre-election profanation". As a military professional, I can say it is impossible to stop hostilities after a year and a half of massive aerial bombings. The question arises why this war was needed in the first place.

Western reaction was cautious. In Washington, a White House spokesman welcomed the initiative but said the US would be "looking for execution". While we have been sympathetic to the very difficult situation he [Mr Yeltsin] faced there, we have also been concerned with what we consider to be an excessive use of force.

Most elements of Mr

Yeltsin's plan were predictable. Russian forces spent March less as at the start of the war in the winter of 1994-95. The aim was to push fighters loyal to the separatist leader, General Dzhokhar Dudayev, back into the southern mountains and to intimidate as many settlements as possible into handing over their weapons and becoming "islands of peace".

Thus, it came as no surprise when Mr Yeltsin announced that two-thirds of Chechen territory was now under Russian control, making possible a withdrawal of some army units to the regional border. Kremlin forces left in Chechnya would keep the fight against "terrorists".

The unexpected part of Mr Yeltsin's plan was his offer to hold indirect talks with Gen Dudayev, whom Moscow has up to now written off as a criminal. In a lively interview with Russian journalists after his rather dry speech, Mr Yeltsin said not all his advisers agreed with him but he had found mediators who would be prepared to go between Moscow and Gen Dudayev.

He spoke of an unnamed Arab sheikh, a former Soviet dissident identified as Orlov and the Kazakh leader, Nursultan Nazarbayev, as possible intermediaries. Yesterday Mikhail Gorbachev, who is trying to get back into the Kremlin, offered his services too, as did politicians

from independent Lithuania and the Muslim Russian region of Tatarstan.

"We are aware," Mr Yeltsin said in a sensational admission, "that Dudayev has built up strength and gained authority with a certain part of the population of Chechnya. This authority is not without taint and is sometimes criminal. But it is authority all the same."

The point of the talks remained a puzzle, however, for Gen Dudayev has said all along that nothing short of full independence will satisfy him while Mr Yeltsin said on Sunday the most he could offer Chechnya was the same kind of autonomy which Tatarstan enjoys.

Gen Dudayev did not immediately respond to the offer but his fighters gave a hint of the likely reaction. "Yeltsin just wants to preserve his job and is pretending to be a nice guy," said Isa Asukhanov, a rebel in southern Chechnya. "They started this war. As long as Russian troops remain on our territory, we will fight them."

Results might not be as important to Mr Yeltsin as impressing the electorate. He has described the Chechen conflict as the "biggest disappointment of my presidency", thus showing he is capable of acknowledging his mistakes. Now he may be perceived as at least trying to do something about his self-created problem.

The plan might help to get Mr Yeltsin re-elected even if it fails to stop the war. With the exception of Grigory Yavlinsky, who advocates a referendum on Chechen independence, few other politicians have any concrete alternatives to offer; and for economic reasons, many Russians are afraid of the Communists.



Dudayev: The Kremlin has recognised his 'authority'

Islamic terror link to French siege

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

French police were yesterday contemplating the possibility of a link between Islamic terrorism, cross-border drug trafficking and a series of ultra-violent bank robberies, following last Friday's fatal shoot-out in the northern city of Roubaix.

A total of five men, presumed gang members, were killed and a sixth – named as Omar Zemiri – is in Belgian police custody after fleeing across the border. Two French policemen were seriously injured.

The Islamic aspect came to the fore after police and judicial sources disclosed yesterday that fundamentalist magazines, some of them banned in France and connected with the Algerian terrorist grouping, FIS, had been found at the house raided by police on Friday, along with a large quantity of firearms. More magazines, weapons and grenades, were found in a car belonging to two of the gang members and stopped by Belgian police after the Roubaix raid.

Four of the five dead were of north African origin, the fifth, Christophe Coze, was French, but had converted to Islam.

The Islamic link, which is matter of great sensitivity after last summer's bombing campaign in Paris, had initially been discounted by the French interior minister, Jean-Louis Debré, who described the gang as "ordinary racketeers". There was no question, he said, "of terrorism, or Islamic fundamentalism". Subsequently, however, he was more circumspect, telling reporters: "It is not impossible that some areas of gangsterism may be associated with some areas of Islam."

Last week's events began with a small explosion in a

stolen car parked outside police headquarters in Lille. Police said that several gas canisters had been placed inside the car and had been connected to a crude remote-control device. They were reluctant, however, to talk of a car bomb or to moot an Islamic connection.

Although some drew a connection with the imminent arrival of President Chirac and foreign dignitaries in Lille for the Group of Seven summit



Stakeout: A police marksman at last week's Roubaix siege

meeting on employment that began yesterday, speculation centred on the possibility of someone with a grudge against the police, possibly on the fringe of organised crime.

The next morning, however, it became evident that police had taken the "car bomb" very seriously indeed. Overnight they had staked out a house in the largely north African quarter of Roubaix, long regarded as a centre of the drugs trade and a "no-go area" for police. At dawn, they attempted to raid

the house; there was an extensive shoot-out which resulted in four occupants dead and the house engulfed in flames.

Two men escaped by car, threw off the pursuing police and crossed into Belgium. Stopped by the Belgian police, one of the men was shot dead; the other ran into a nearby house and held two women hostage until forced out by police. Apparently the only survivor of the immediate gang, he is being held in Belgian custody.

The initial theory was that at least one of the men hiding out in the Roubaix house was connected with a series of unsolved robberies in the area, distinguished by the ruthlessness of the gang and the sophistication of their weapons.

The upsurge in violent, often drugs-related, crime in north-eastern France and the relative ease with which criminals could cross the Belgian border was one reason why France refused last year to implement the Schengen treaty on lifting border controls.

There were, however, unusual aspects to the events of last Thursday and Friday which raised suspicions that something more than either money or drugs was involved. The crudeness of the "car bomb" and its placing suggested either extreme amateurism or a symbolic gesture, possibly both.

Police also expressed amazement that the four occupants of the Roubaix house had apparently preferred to die in the flames rather than surrender.

The disclosure over the weekend that one of the dead men was a French convert to Islam has really set the alarm bells ringing, and the authorities – who were hoping that last year's fundamentalist violence had ended – will now be back on full anti-terrorist alert.



Coming home: A family mourns as the body of Bosnian army soldier Adnan Huskic, killed in 1993 in Sarajevo, is buried at Kovaci Photograph: Reuters

Bosnia village left behind the lines

Kovacevici —

The men of this Muslim village, who share a surname and a pretty, shell-scarred village of 250 houses, held out against tank fire, rockets and howitzers. But by the stroke of a pen in Dayton, Ohio, they found themselves living on the wrong side of the line, the Serb-held side, to the mild embarrassment of their own peace negotiators.

The Sarajevo Serbs fled in their thousands rather than submit to the authority of the enemy, but the Muslims of Kovacevici are made of sterner stuff. "Though we are on the wrong side of the line, we will not leave," said Mirsad Kahrimanovic, lolling in the sun with his comrades, taking a break from the communal task of repairing electricity lines. "Why should we? This land is ours."

The view across the lightly wooded rolling green hills is interrupted by a bunker some 100 metres away – a Bosnian army position close to what was the front line with the rebel Serb army. "At one time there was a tank only five metres from that house," Mirsad, young and blond, said casually.

But although their weapons almost reached the village, their soldiers never came near," added Muzijet Kahrimanovic, a kindly, studious young man. "They attacked with everything but the atomic bomb," said Ferid Kahrimanovic, a handsome 40-year-old who proves the

A stroke of the pen in Dayton put Muslim villagers in land held by Serbs – and they plan to stay. Emma Daly reports

exception to the rule that adult Bosnian villagers can look 20 years older than their age. "The Serbs never came here during the war and we hope they won't in peacetime," said Muzijet who, like his friends, was wearing gumboots instead of the more familiar army boots. So far the authorities in Republika Srpska, the Serb-held entity in Bosnia, who should have assumed control of the area on 19 March, have declined to exercise their right to send in police patrols.

Kovacevici, whose pre-war population has halved to

around 500, might yet get away: a bilateral commission set up to negotiate the changes to the inelegantly named Inter-Entity Boundary Line meets again on Friday. The village and several others in similar positions may still be swapped for uninhabited territory elsewhere.

"We heard the news that we were on the wrong side of the line through Serb media," Mirsad explained. "Well," interjected Ferid, "when we first saw the [Dayton] map it looked as if the line was east of the village – but then we realised it was three or four kilometres out ...

the map on Serb TV was [drawn to a scale of] 1:300,000."

The Dayton negotiators made the same mistake. A Bosnian official, Mirza Hajric said yesterday: "When we came back [from Dayton] we had not seen the detailed map which was still being printed in the US. We got it 15 days later," Mr Hajric said. "It's one more proof that Dayton is not perfect."

Kovacevici, however, has no intention of bowing to Dayton. "The Serb police will not come – they would not dare. If I was Serb I would not dare. I would be ashamed to come here."

GIs to get missile interceptors

American troops in Bosnia are to be protected by a backpack device which uses radio waves to detonate incoming artillery and mortar shells prematurely, writes Christopher Bellamy.

The United States Army intends to field the Shortstop electronic protection system to defend airfields, barracks, command posts and US forces on patrol later this year, according to Jane's Defence Weekly.

The lightest variant of the system weighs 25lb to 30lb and can be carried in a backpack. There are also 50lb and 100lb devices, which can be mounted

in vehicles or in static positions. Nine of these units, costing about \$60,000 (£39,400) each, will be delivered later this year.

The incoming shells which Shortstop is designed to counter use a reflected radio signal to make them explode about 30 feet above the ground.

The Americans discovered the idea by accident in the Second World War, during the Battle of the Bulge, when in their desperation the American troops fired everything they had – including very expensive anti-aircraft shells – at the German ground troops. The

shells exploded at the most lethal possible height above the ground. Shortstop captures the signal from the incoming shell and throws it back, tricking it into detonating as much as 800 metres (half a mile) from the target it is protecting.

However, the trouble is that the warring factions in Bosnia are not nearly as sophisticated as the Americans.

Nevertheless, the United States forces believe that Shortstop will protect key targets against the deadliest shells and mortar bombs that the former warring factions might use.

Ferid announced. "Nothing would happen to them but I don't think they will come," added Muzijet, and anyway, the locals said the only road into the rest of Republika Srpska was virtually destroyed in the war. "They can walk in if they want," said Fedahiga Kahrimanovic – yet another cousin – with a smile.

But the men pointing to a deserted village on a hill a few hundred metres away said that local Serbs should return home. "Nobody has touched those houses and nobody will," said Fedahiga said.

"The Serbs should also start working and living there, repairing their houses," added Mirsad, explaining that villagers who sought refuge in Tuzla during the war were coming home to Kovacevici too. "We love our village and want to stay here. We could have taken that [Serb] village but we didn't want it."

This loyalty to their land underpins society in the Bosnian countryside. Refugees don't want to be given a house – they want their house. And those who held on have no intention of leaving, come what may.

What, they ask was Kovacevici known for before the war? "We had our mineral water," said Muzijet of a famous spring in a neighbouring village. "And good people," Sedahiga added. "Bosnian souls," Muzijet concluded with a smile.

Democrats unite against Nigerian regime

Oslo (Agencies) – Nigerian pro-democracy groups said yesterday they had decided to join forces under an umbrella organisation to oppose Nigeria's military government.

At secret weekend talks in Oslo and Johannesburg, 13 organisations agreed to call themselves the United Democratic Front of Nigeria (UDFN) and voted to strive peacefully to restore civilian rule in the west African country.

"We, the pro-democracy organisations... unanimously agreed to work together under a common platform, United Democratic Front of Nigeria, to effectively harness and facilitate our activities toward the

restoration of democracy in Nigeria," the UDFN said in a statement. The meeting was chaired in Oslo by Nigerian dissident Wole Soyinka who won the Nobel literature prize in 1986.

"The main point is that the military regime's opponents must speak with one voice, especially in political matters," Mr Soyinka told the Norwegian state radio network NRK.

Nigeria was thrown into political turmoil after the military government of General Ibrahim Babangida annulled a democratic presidential election in June 1993, won by Chief MKO Abiola.

The Babangida administration imposed an interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan with General Sani Abacha as vice president. Gen Abacha seized full power in November 1993 and restored full military rule.

President-elect Abiola has been in detention since June 1994 on charges of treason for claiming his mandate.

"Abacha's rule has been characterised by institutionalised anarchy, corruption, economic decline and gross human rights abuses. Therefore, the limited sanctions imposed on Nigeria by the US and the European Union have not been effective in forcing Abacha and his regime to bow to the wishes of

the people... or to respect the basic standards of international behaviour," the UDFN statement said.

The group set out 10 resolutions rejecting what it called the Abacha dictatorship, calling for the immediate release of all political prisoners, the implementation of an oil embargo and for all governments and financial institutions to halt debt rescheduling and new loans to Nigeria.

The UDFN will reassemble in eight weeks "somewhere in west Africa" to write the group's formal constitution, said a spokesman at the Norwegian Council for Africa, which hosted the secret talks.



Wole Soyinka: 'Opponents must speak with one voice'

Buying a Fax?



* What to Buy for Business Magazine 1994/95

Need we say more?

Unlike the vast majority of our competitors who sell anything from copiers to labelling machines, we at Muratec specialise in fax, and fax alone. It's one of the reasons that so many of our machines have been awarded the 'Best Buy', 'Good Value' and 'Worth a Look' accolades from What to Buy for Business magazine and why our latest compact plain paper fax – the F60, collected the 1995 Business Excellence Award

from Business Equipment Digest magazine. But what would you expect from a company that has been making top quality fax machines for nearly 25 years and offers a twelve month 'on site' warranty with every model. Before you commit to buying your next fax, take a look at our Fax Facts Buyers Guide. Just call 0345 626782 and we'll send you a copy absolutely free.

For a FREE Fax Buyers Guide, call 0345 626782

muratec
the fax specialists

Bureaucracy take br global U

Islam to lead



Baksheesh flavour to

BUCHA

April 2015

Bureaucrats to take brunt of global UN cuts

DAVID USBORNE
New York

Tectering on the brink of bankruptcy and under intense pressure to reinvent itself, the United Nations yesterday took the wraps off plans to trim its staff levels by as much as 10 per cent and to curtail its worldwide programmes.

The job-cutting campaign will come as a hammer-blow to a UN workforce that is already afflicted by bitterness and rock-bottom morale. But it is likely to be welcomed by many member states, including Britain, as an overdue attempt at pruning a bureaucracy often labelled as hopelessly bloated and inefficient.

The redundancies will not directly affect the various semi-independent UN agencies, such as the World Health Organisation, but is focused on the roughly 10,000 employees of the UN's core secretariat, primarily in New York, but also in Geneva and Vienna and field offices around the world.

Briefing national ambassadors yesterday, Joseph Connor, the Under Secretary-General in charge of finances, detailed a three-pronged plan to trim staffing that would result in a vacancy rate inside the UN of 6.4 per cent, much higher than ever before. At least 800 posts will be emptied while retirement age rules will be strictly enforced and recruitment will be frozen.

Affected employees will face one of three possible fates: a transfer to another post inside

the UN; an offer of a buy-out equal to a year or more of their regular salary, depending on their length of service; or compulsory redundancy. The measures are to be completed over the next four months.

Mr Connor, who used to be a director of the accounting firm Price Waterhouse, conceded that life for UN employees was already hard. "This isn't a particularly good place to work any more," he commented. "Compensation for civil servants is falling behind, pressures are on and people work 70 hours a week here at the upper levels."

The last phase of the plan to be enacted will be the involuntary firings, when the opportunities for buy-outs and transfers have been exhausted. Officials said these were not likely before July and the final number involved was still uncertain, though it may be no more than one or two hundred.

The staffing reductions have been forced on the UN by a \$154m shortfall in the 1996-97 biennial budget recently approved by the General Assembly, compared with the draft proposed by the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In addition to shedding people, the UN will cut back what it offers in almost every sphere of its activities.

Details of those cuts are contained in documents that began circulating in New York yesterday. Departments slated for large cuts in operating resources include public information (by as much as \$8m), human rights (\$2.9m), Economic Commission

for Africa (\$4.7m), peace-keeping (\$6.4m) and political affairs (\$3.5m). The administration and management divisions of the UN will see their budget cut by as much as \$48m.

The impact of the cuts will be widespread and will be felt by almost anyone, including charities and governments, that overlaps with UN activities. There will be fewer UN conferences, fewer publications, fewer reports and fewer UN personnel around the world.

The atmosphere in the corridors of the UN's headquarters in New York, meanwhile, is more at best, even among those whose jobs may be secure. "There is despondency, because everyone is aware that everything that they are working on is going to be less effective," one senior official noted. "And everyone notices all the UN-bashing that goes on and that affects morale."

Many inside the bureaucracy also have little confidence that the opportunity will be taken to ensure that it is the deadwood that is jettisoned and not those who are genuinely talented and energetic. "That is an understatement," one source said. "I am sure they will get it wrong."

Politically speaking, however, some pruning of the UN staff is unavoidable. The US has made it plain that it will not come forward with the roughly \$1.5bn that it owes the organisation unless it proves its willingness to begin serious internal reforms, including some reduction in its size.

UNHCR challenges US refugee laws

Geneva (Reuters) — The United Nations refugee agency, making a rare foray into United States domestic politics, said yesterday it would lobby "at the highest levels" against planned US laws it feared could deny asylum to genuine refugees.

A senior official with the UN High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR), Dennis McNamara, said bills before the US Congress to curb illegal immigration could violate the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 additional protocol, to which the US is a party.

"Our concern is that we will have people removed to unsafe situations," Mr McNamara said.

One section of the proposals, due to go before the Senate in mid-April, and to which the UNHCR objects, would allow officials to deny potential refugees a judicial hearing if they did not establish in a preliminary interview a "credible fear of persecution" if they were forced to return home.



Greek gripes: Motorcycle enthusiasts protesting in Athens at new taxes on their vehicles and demanding better roads and services. Photograph: Reuters

Japan adds its voice to scrapping ivory ban

RICHARD LLOYD PARRY
Tokyo

The Japanese government is set to be drawn into a fresh environmental controversy about the banned trade in African ivory. Southern African nations have enlisted the support of Japan — traditionally a leading user of ivory — in talks aimed at amending the United Nations Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites), which implemented a ban on sales of ivory in 1989.

In February, Japanese bureaucrats secretly met at the Mokuti Lodge in Namibia's Etosha National Park with officials from Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Malawi, who collectively make up the South Africa Centre for the Ivory Trade (SACIT).

Delegates at the meeting, who included representatives of environmental NGOs and the British Department of the Environment, expect to reach a final decision in the next three months. But Japanese officials are quietly confident that they will lend their support to a lifting of the ivory ban, and the issue is likely to be raised at the next Cites convention in Zimbabwe in 1997.

Japan is one of the biggest ivory markets in the world, and almost 4,000 businesses rely on elephant tusks for the manufacture of jewellery, traditional musical instruments and personal seals, which are widely used in place of signatures. Since the ban, craftsmen have relied on stocks but only 160 tons remain and they will run out in five or six years.

At the same time, African countries are becoming increasingly frustrated by the ban which prevents them from selling off large stocks of tusks, legitimately gathered during official culls.

Half of elephants in Africa live outside the game reserves and, despite culling, they are often a great nuisance to farmers and inhabitants. African officials believe that the ban encourages

poaching by driving up the market price of ivory, and fostering an atmosphere in which elephants are regarded as a menace rather than a valuable resource. A controlled trade, they argue, would also generate much-needed funds for conservation projects.

"When the ban first came in, there was a decline in poaching, but all the indications are that the scale of the illegal trade is increasing," says Dr Malan Lindede, Namibia's deputy director of resource management, who set up the February meeting. "People have little reason to tolerate elephants — they are shot, ivory is exported, and there is no benefit to conservation or to society. Our intention is to make elephants as valuable as possible."

"Our principle is that a decision should be based upon scientific facts," says an official of the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry. "The population of elephants in south Africa is very stable, and the south African nations should be allowed to reopen the trade for the sustainable use of ivory products. In Japan, the ivory industry is very traditional, and we regard it as an important part of Japanese culture."

Tokyo's Environment Agency is wary of raising the issue for fear of reinforcing Japan's reputation as an environmental violator. Japan uses the same arguments in support of its call for a resumption of commercial whaling, an issue which has generated international opprobrium. "There's not enough infrastructure in Africa to control an elephant industry," says David Butcher, the chief executive of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). "It's the most likely thing that would lead to elephant extinction. Anyone who said anything to the contrary is crazy."

Environmental groups also claim that controls in Japan are inadequate to prevent trade in illegal ivory and depend too much on the goodwill of the businesses involved.

Islamist to lead Sudanese parliament



Turabi: Called for national reconciliation

MOHAMED OSMAN
Associated Press

Khartoum — Hassan Turabi, the Islamic leader long considered the power behind Sudan's government, was unanimously chosen yesterday as the speaker of the newly elected parliament.

Turabi won a seat in the National Assembly during the presidential and parliamentary elections, held between 6 and 17 March, the country's first such polls since 1986. Before that, he held no official position in the government, despite guiding Sudan's efforts to create an Islamic society.

Sudan has poor relations

with most of its neighbours, including Egypt, which accuses Mr Turabi of being the mastermind behind Sudan's attempts to export radical Islam. The United Nations, meanwhile, is threatening sanctions over Sudan's failure to turn over three men wanted for the assassination attempt on the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak, last June.

But Mr Turabi struck a conciliatory tone yesterday. Parliament's aim, he said, was a "reconciliation among all Sudanese people's forces and a rehabilitation of foreign relations that will seek dialogue, peace and co-operation with the world".

Dressed in white Sudanese robe and head-dress, he was nominated by the former speaker of the transitional National Assembly, which was dissolved after the elections. His nomination was unopposed by the 400 members of parliament.

All but one of the candidates chosen for parliament were government supporters. Lt Gen Omar el-Bashir, who led the 1989 coup that brought the Islamic fundamentalist government to power, was elected president in a vote boycotted by opposition groups.

He was sworn in yesterday and promised that his goal would be to end Sudan's 13-year civil war.

Baksheesh brings exotic flavour to Paris of East

Bucharest — It may not be the glittering West, but as far as Ahmed Mohammed is concerned, his streets are paved with gold. Adjusting his fez, he smiles as Romanians cast their hungry eyes over his market stall bearing sweets, chocolates, cheap perfumes and coffee. The prices for bulk purchases are all marked but if they want to haggle, he will oblige.

"After so many years of deprivation, Romanians cannot get enough of these goods," he says. Like many traders in the Flori market on the city outskirts, Mr Mohammed is from Iraq, not a country offering the brightest prospects for would-be entrepreneurs. He is joined by a colourful array of like-minded merchants from Syria and Lebanon and as far afield as China.

Since the overthrow of Communism, Bucharest has become a Mecca for Arabs and Asians, tempted by easy visas and demand for the cheap imported goods in which they specialise.

To some extent they also feel at home. "This country is not far from the Orient but it is somewhere between the two," says Mr Mohammed, side-strepping a trolley of "Arabic" washing-powder bearing Arabic inscriptions. "There is a fluctuation between the white market and the black market. Here

BUCHAREST DAYS

"we can thrive." An Egyptian importer put it more succinctly: "This is a land of baksheesh in a European setting."

Certainly the rules governing economic life in Romania today are unclear, with backrooms providing the setting for many a money transaction and bribery forming an almost indispensable part of business activity.

Under the Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Romanians were denied almost all consumer goods and initiative was extinguished. For the foreign traders who got on the bandwagon first, therefore, the country provided rich pickings, with the most successful moving from street stalls and kiosks to open proper businesses, factories and restaurants.

"We have opportunities here that are simply not open to us in Western Europe," says Mr Mohammed, who plans to open a chocolate factory. "Of course we would prefer to be operating out of Germany or Sweden but there is no way those countries would ever accept us."

Under Ceausescu, Romania maintained strong ties with the Arab world and, to Moscow's annoyance, with China and North Korea. Thousands of

foreign students were invited to Romanian universities and cultural exchange programmes were strengthened.

In the aftermath of the 1989 revolution, however, most Romanians hoped the country would turn West and that the West would show interest in Romania. Much was made of its cultural ties to France, its linguistic affinities, penchant for croissants (albeit stodgy ones) and even architectural echoes (Bucharest was known as the Paris of the East before the war and still boasts a replica Arc de Triomphe).

But for all the declarations of support and joy at the overthrow of Ceausescu, few Western countries and companies chose to invest in Romania, most opting for the more prosperous Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland. "Of course we would prefer to be doing business with West Europeans but they never really came," said Dan Bordea, a market-stall trader who had gone to the Flori to stock up on cigarettes at \$6 (£4) a time for cartons of 200. "The Arabs and Asians filled a gap. And personally, I enjoy doing business with them."

Not all Romanians share his

sentiment and some feel the sort of resentment usually reserved for the country's large Gypsy community.

Last year Major Florin Ionescu of the Bucharest police blamed a rise in crime on the presence of so many foreign traders. "They are not really businessmen but are more like explorers digging for gold," he said. "Take the Chinese. They will come here with five shirts and leave two months later with \$10,000 stuffed in a suitcase."

Nicolae Vacaroiu, the Prime Minister, also claims the Arabs and Asians are little more than "speculators and smugglers" whose presence in the country has had a negative impact. Rather than outlawing them, however, he predicts that they will be squeezed out of the market as the country's economy reforms and matures.

In the Flori market, meanwhile, business is thriving. "Some people here think that we Arabs are stealing money from Romanians but everything we make is only through our business," says Ali, another Iraqi trader. "The truth is that the Romanians don't really like us here but they do like our goods — and especially our cheap prices."

Adrian Bridge

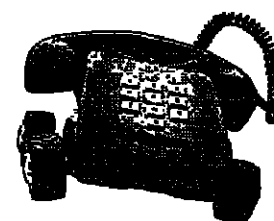
A cheaper mortgage, no legal fees and 20% off your buildings insurance when you transfer to Direct Line.

- Transferring to Direct Line can save you £50 every month on your mortgage.
- Phone before 30th April and transfer using our solicitors package and we'll pay your legal fees.
- We'll give you a free valuation.
- We also guarantee to save you 20% if you transfer your buildings cover from your existing lender.
- Mortgages are available for up to 85% of the property valuation or purchase price, whichever is lower.

Call now. We're waiting to do a great deal for you.

*Typical Mortgage of £80,000 repayable over 25 years (£300 monthly payments).				
Lender	APR (Variable)	Monthly Repayments (after tax relief)	Monthly saving with Direct Line	Total Payable
HALIFAX	7.7%	£57.95	£3.47	£167,385
ABBEY NATIONAL	7.6%	£57.00	£3.52	£167,100
WOOLWICH	7.5%	£56.70	£3.22	£167,610
DIRECT LINE	6.4%	£50.46		£151,644

APR is based on Standard Variable Rate. Repayment mortgage, current at 1st April 1996 (Money Mail) rates for existing customers applying from 1st May 1996. *MARS has been calculated under current tax legislation which may change.



DIRECT LINE
MORTGAGES

0181 649 9099

LONDON

0161 831 9099

MANCHESTER

0141 221 9099

GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. IND44
Revised hours for Good Friday and Easter Monday 8am to 6pm.

Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH. Direct Line and the red telephone on wheels are the trade marks of Direct Line Insurance plc and used with the permission of Direct Line Insurance plc. Direct Line mortgages from £20,000 to £300,000 are available for up to 85% of the property valuation or purchase price, whichever is the lower. Applicants must be aged 18 to 62 and Direct Line Financial Services Limited reserves the right to decline any application. Life insurance to cover the amount of the loan and security in the form of a first legal charge (Standard Security - Scotland) over the property will be required. The property must be fully insured for the duration of the loan. All rates quoted are for standard variable rate mortgages. The standard valuation fee will be refunded to the borrower once the mortgage is set up (for the example quoted the fee would be £125). Direct Line will pay the legal fees only where the mortgage on the borrower's existing home is transferred using Direct Line's special arrangements for legal fees. Written quotations are available on request. Some mortgages may require payment of a fee to the existing lender when being transferred. *The guaranteed insurance saving only applies if your current insurance is arranged by your lender and is subject to our normal underwriting criteria and corresponding levels of cover. For your added security all telephone calls will be recorded and the recording kept secure. YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

"We'd like to make a few changes to our 800 Series," we said. "Starting with the engine. 2.5 litre, 24 valve would be good, perhaps based on the award-winning K-Series. It should be capable of 175PS. And, of course, with this much power, you'll have to design a new engine management system to ensure it's delivered smoothly. Don't forget to look at engine emissions, either. It would be great to get them down to 50% below EC directives. What do you think?"

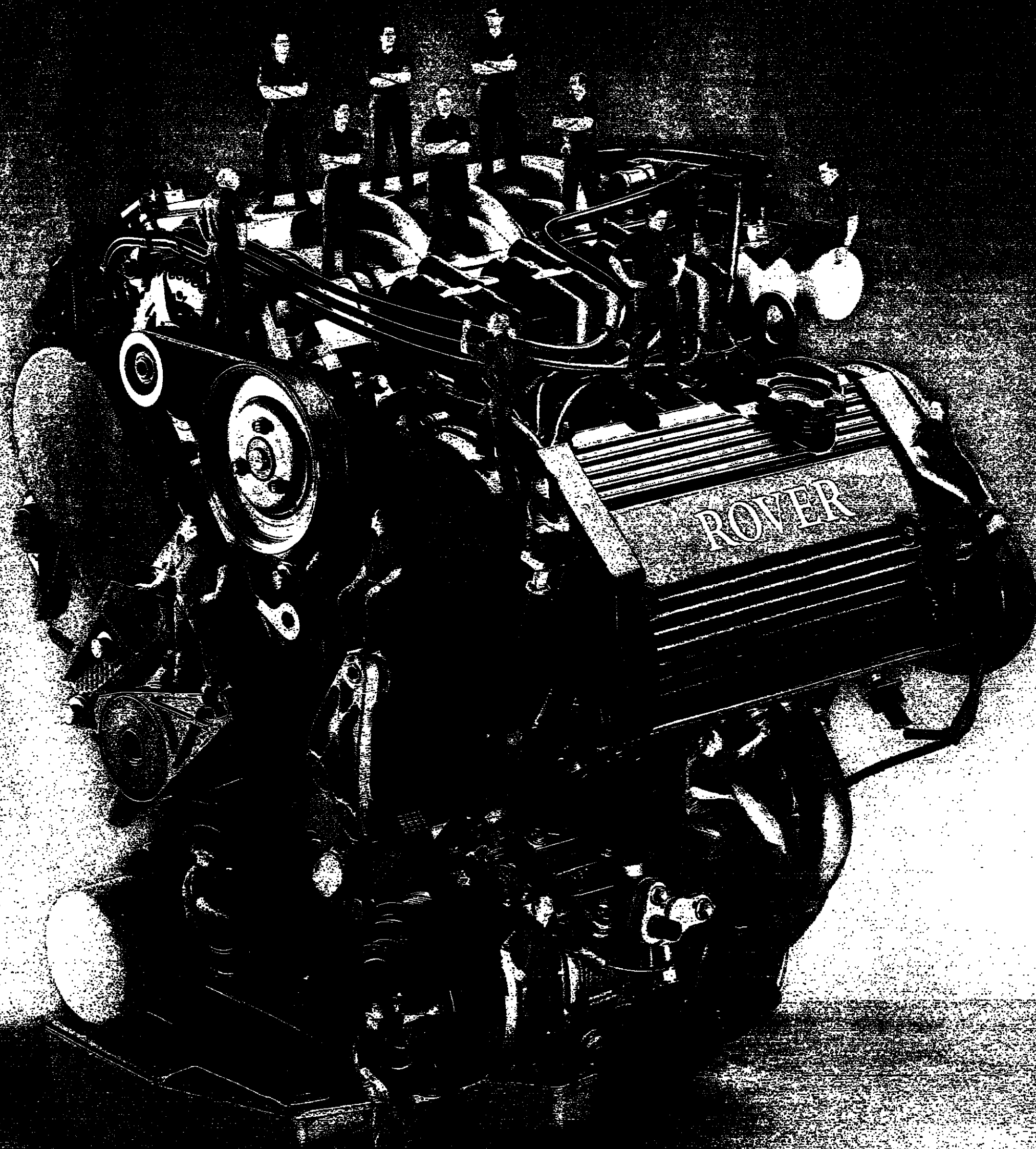


"We'd better get to work," replied our 18 engineers.

And they did.

To test drive all the working parts of the new Rover 800, call 0345 186 186.

THE 18 WORKING PARTS THAT MAKE OUR NEW KV6 ENGINE RUN SMOOTHER.



PRICES FOR KV6 MODELS START FROM £21,995 FOR THE 823SL. THE ROVER 800 RANGE STARTS FROM £17,995. PRICES CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. EXCLUDE £528 COST OF DELIVERY TO DEALER. NUMBER PLATES AND SIX MONTHS ROAD TAX. SUBJECT TO VEHICLE AVAILABILITY.

0345 186 186

Siege COI

2 for 1 Eur

IND

Jail dramas: Prison chief and TV crew held in Brazil ■ Woman judge seized in Argentina



High life: Inmates at Olmos prison, near Buenos Aires, take to the roof in a protest over conditions by 5,000 prisoners across Argentina. Photograph: Enrique Marcarian/Reuters

Siege convicts demand top guns

PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

To your average hostage-holding prisoner, the negotiators' offer might not have appeared too bad. Cash, getaway cars, guns and ammunition to ensure a clean getaway.

The two dozen Brazilian prisoners holding hostages in a jail south-west of Brasilia, however, were not satisfied. They demanded weapons more powerful than the .38 pistols they were offered and souped-up cars able to outrun police pursuers.

The demands of the prisoners at the Agro-industrial penitentiary in Aparecida de Goiania have led to a tense

stand-off and fears of a massacre if police move in. The inmates yesterday still holding 23 hostages, including the prison director and a television crew, whom they seized during an inspection tour last Thursday.

The hostages were said to be surrounded by canisters of cooking oil, which the inmates were threatening to blow up.

Led by one of Brazil's best-known criminals, 25-year-old kidnapper Leonardo Pareja, the inmates took advantage of the inspection to grab hostages including prison director Nicola Limongi, local officials, police officers and the television crew. Although the inspection

was to check reports of overcrowding — there were almost 1,000 prisoners in the jail instead of its 450 capacity — the hostage-takers' aim appeared to be simply to escape. The vast majority of the inmates did not take part and have been moved.

In full view of cameras, the hostage-takers staged a football match in the prison yard on Sunday, running around the pitch with pistols in their hands.

In an emotional appeal to police not to attack, Mr Limongi appeared on a prison wall with a pistol trained on him by an inmate. "Brazil doesn't need another Carandiru," he shouted, a reference to a 1992 massacre of more than 100 inmates after

a prison riot in Sao Paulo. When the prisoner fired a shot in the air, watched by millions on live television, the prison director shouted "for the love of God" and sobbed as he asked his family to "forgive me for my mistakes". Looking on from police lines, his son shouted "have strength dad, I love you".

After a negotiating team met Pareja on Saturday, the authorities agreed to give the prisoners five cars, pistols, ammunition and about \$25,000 in cash in return for the release of 18 hostages. The five remaining hostages would have left with the prisoners, one hostage in each car.

Pareja then demanded faster

cars and "state of the art weaponry" and said that he would not talk again until today. Some police officers at the scene implied that the drama could be over by then but would not say why.

Meanwhile, four separate prison riots were reported in Argentina at the weekend after a failed break-out at one of the jail's. A woman judge who had tried to negotiate was among 15 hostages being held at the Sierra Chica prison near the town of Alvarria.

Inmates were demanding faster treatment of their cases, better conditions and greater visiting rights. The three other riots appeared to be in solidar-

ity with the Sierra Chica rebellion. Like Sierra Chica, all were in Buenos Aires province.

Judge Maria Malere and her secretary were captured on Saturday when they went to speak with prisoners who had overpowered guards after a failed mass break-out.

The Sierra Chica prisoners were holding 10 wardens and three evangelical preachers. They handed over demands, including more relaxed visiting rules.

Relatives of the prisoners, mostly women, began gathering outside Sierra Chica early on Sunday and some were allowed briefly through the heavily armed cordon of guards.

IN BRIEF

Peres to hold peace referendum

Jerusalem — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said yesterday that he would hold a referendum on any final peace agreement with the Palestinians. His pledge appeared aimed at undecided voters in forthcoming elections who fear that he would make too many concessions to the Palestinians.

Negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as the future of 144 Jewish settlements, are to begin in May. Mr Peres was speaking as he left for a visit to Oman, the second by an Israeli Premier to the Gulf Arab state in less than two years.

Algiers closes Spanish news bureau

Madrid — The Spanish newspaper *El Pais* said yesterday that Algeria had withdrawn its Algerian correspondent's accreditation, effectively closing the newspaper's bureau. *El Pais* said the Algerian foreign ministry gave no official explanation but that its press chief told the newspaper's correspondent Ferran Sales the government disliked his coverage and resented the fact that he was also reporting on Morocco.

Liberals withdraw support from Yeltsin

Moscow — Five major figures in Russia's liberal movement, including human-rights activists Sergei Kovalev and Yelena Bonner, said yesterday they would not support President Boris Yeltsin's re-election bid but would back liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky (right), currently an outsider, in the presidential election. Their declaration, and the creation of a public committee to back Mr Yavlinsky, was a setback for Mr Yeltsin.



Tehran must condemn terrorism, says EU

Rome — A European Union delegation will visit Tehran today, to tell the Iranian government that the future of its dialogue with Europe depends on a firm condemnation of terrorism, diplomats said yesterday. The *Irish* of senior officials from Italy, Spain and Ireland hoped to continue to Libya.

UFO spotted near Saudi oil refinery

Dubai — An unidentified flying object was sighted last week in Saudi Arabia's oil-producing eastern region, a Saudi newspaper reported yesterday. "Flying saucer illuminates Jubail," said the headline of a story in *al-Ekhlaf*. The story said that the Thursday night sighting was reported by a group of people who were camping north of the Gulf coast city of Jubail, site of the kingdom's second-largest oil refinery.

200 feared dead in Haiti ferry disaster

Port-au-Prince — About 200 people were feared dead after an overcrowded ferry sank off the coast of Haiti on Thursday, Radio Haiti Inter reported yesterday. The ferry *Lavi Wonn* went down off Les Irois, a coastal town in south-west Haiti, the report said. Poor communications in rural Haiti were said to have delayed news of the disaster from reaching the capital until yesterday.

Russia plays fool with diamond grenade

Moscow — A Moscow military factory has developed a diamond-studded grenade so that Russia's newly-rich gangster class can send their enemies to oblivion in style. At least, so said the normally staid *Itar-Tass* news agency. "The use of such a grenade will leave your one-time rival in a sea of beautiful sparkling gems, rather than in a pool of blood," the hoax story said.

Lost contact with Cambodian kidnappers

Phnom Penh, Cambodia — Authorities have failed to regain contact with the kidnappers of a British land-mine removal expert and his Cambodian interpreter, an official said yesterday. Christopher Howes, 36, and Houn Hounth, 30, were working for the British-based Mines Advisory Group when they were seized by a group of armed men on March 26. They were last seen alive last Wednesday by intermediaries for the government.

2 for 1 Eurostar offer with THE INDEPENDENT

We are offering readers of The Independent and the Independent on Sunday a superb 2 for 1 offer on day return trips with Eurostar, for only £125. When you pay for one standard day return ticket at £125, to either Paris, Lille or Brussels, you will get another to the same value, free.

Eurostar is a service provided together by the railways of Britain, France and Belgium. Simply sit back, relax and in just over three hours you can travel from city centre to city centre, through the Channel Tunnel.

Travel to Paris and discover the splendour of the Sacre Coeur Basilica and the Notre Dame Cathedral; the richness of the Louvre Museum; the vibrancy of the Champs Elysees and the sheer scale of the awe inspiring Eiffel Tower.

Or why not visit Lille, the former capital of French Flanders. It offers a rich collection of architectural curiosities including the pentagonal Citadel fortress built by Vauban, and many enticing restaurants dotted around the city. Brussels holds plentiful attractions, ranging from historic sights to superb restaurants, stylish shops and cafes.

If you would like to stay a little longer in either Paris or Brussels, then you can make use of our second offer. With our Short Break, you can stay in a small, friendly hotel, right in the heart of Paris or Brussels.

Prices start from £109 per person and include one night's accommodation (sharing a twin or double room); continental breakfast; return Eurostar travel and local taxes.



All the hotels have private facilities with easy access to either the metro or public transport. For Brussels, there are mid-week supplements for three and four star hotels upwards, from £8 per person per night. Listed on this page are details of the hotels.

How to Qualify
Simply collect four differently num-

bered tokens from the seven we will be printing until Saturday 6 April. On Wednesday 3 April we will print an application form which you must complete and send with your tokens. Today we are printing Token 3; Token 4 will be printed in tomorrow's Independent.

How to Book

To book your Eurostar 2 for 1 day return trip to either Paris, Lille or Brussels, simply call 0345 660420 (9am - 5pm Mon-Sun). Your travel arrangements will be checked and the booking price confirmed. You will be asked to pay by cheque/credit card to European Passenger Services Limited. If you are paying by cheque you will be given details of where to send your cheque to. Your four tokens and application form should be sent to: Independent/Eurostar, PO Box 4AP, London W1A 4AP.

To book your Short Break to either Paris or Brussels, simply select the hotel at which you would like to stay, then call 01233 646181 (9am - 5.30pm Mon-Fri). Your hotel availability and travel arrangements will be checked and the booking price confirmed. You will be asked to pay by cheque/credit card to Swinards. Your four tokens, application form and cheques should be sent to: Independent/Swinards UK Ltd, 26a Bank Street, Ashford, Kent TN23 1BA.

Bookings for both our offers can be made from 3 April - 10 May 1996. Travel is available from 29 April - 3 June 1996. Terms and Conditions are as previously published and are avail-

Hotel Name	Grade	Short Break (cost per person)	Extra Night (cost per person)
PARIS:			
Baccarat	2	£109	£33
Royal Navarin	2	£109	£33
Royal Magenta	3	£129	£44
Cheverny	3	£129	£44
Appia	3 (superior)	£139	£54
Cusset	3 (superior)	£139	£54
Brebant	4	£155	£70
The Garden Elysee	4 (superior)	£175	£89
BRUSSELS:			
Le Cascade	2	£109	£36
The Vendome	3	£119	£42
Le Cadetford	4	£125	£46



Renewing your home insurance in April or May?

If you're 50 or over, save with Saga Home Insurance

You will know how expensive home insurance can be - particularly if your insurance company is also having to insure younger, less careful householders. Thankfully, if you're aged 50 or over you can benefit from Saga Home Insurance - a superior household insurance that's only available to mature, responsible people like you.

Because of this, Saga Home Insurance can offer you genuine savings over other policies, while giving you cover that fully protects your home and possessions. So if your home insurance is due for renewal soon, or if you would simply like to find out how much you could save with Saga Home Insurance, call us today - free.

The Saga Price Promise

If you find another comparable policy at a lower price within 2 months of taking out Saga Home Insurance, we'll refund you the difference.

SAGA
Services Ltd

Saga Services Ltd would like to send you information about services provided by other Saga companies and may pass details to these companies to enable them to do so.



- Exclusively for people aged 50 or over.
- Cover is comprehensive and low cost.
- Free Saga Assist service - 24 Hour Domestic Helpline. 24 Hour Legal Helpline. 24 Hour Glazing Service. Key Recovery Service.
- Free pen with your quotation.
- Low Excesses.

Call us today!

For your free no obligation quote and a free Saga pen, simply call us on the number below. We will be pleased to answer any questions you have on Saga Home Insurance.

0800 414 525 ext. 2687

Lines open Monday to Friday 9am - 6pm. Saturday 9am - 1pm

Alternatively, send this coupon to us in an envelope - you do not need a stamp:
Saga Services Limited, FREEPOST731, Middelburg Square, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1BR

Mr / Mrs / Miss Initial: _____ Surname: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____
Telephone No: _____ Date of birth: ____/____/____

Occupation: _____
Policy Renewal Date: _____ No. of bedrooms: _____

Type of Property:
Detached House: ☐ Semi-detached House: ☐
Terraced House: ☐ Detached Bungalow: ☐
Semi-detached Bungalow: ☐ Flat/Maisonette: ☐
Other: ☐ Please specify: _____

Approximately when was it built?
Pre 1920 ☐ 1920-1945 ☐ 1946-1979 ☐ 1980-Present ☐

Please tick the type of cover for which you would like a quotation.
Home Contents Cover ☐
Buildings Cover ☐

Answer YES to the following and you could save up to 15% on your Contents premium.
Does your home have an annually maintained burglar alarm? Yes ☐ No ☐
Is a 5-level mortise lock fitted to the final exit door? Yes ☐ No ☐
Are all other external doors fitted with key-operated locks or bolts? Yes ☐ No ☐
Are secure key-operated locks fitted to all accessible windows? Yes ☐ No ☐
Are you an active member of a Police Approved Neighbourhood Watch Scheme? Yes ☐ No ☐

For insurance on listed buildings, those of non-standard construction, flats and maisonettes. Or if you are the landlord of the property to be insured, please telephone 0800 414 525 ext 2687 for your quote or tick the box for further details ☐

H 2687

THE INDEPENDENT

FOUNDED 1986

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000/0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435/0171-345 2435

EDITOR: Charles Wilson

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Charles Leadbeater MANAGING EDITOR: Colin Hughes
SECTION TWO EDITOR: Simon Kelner EXECUTIVE NEWS EDITOR: Michael Williams
NIGHT EDITOR: Richard HaldredNEWSPAPER PUBLISHING PLC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Liam Healy (Chairman) Lord Borrie Ben Bradlee Juan Luis Cebrian Brendan Hopkins
David Montgomery Javier Diaz de Polanco Cornel Riklin Andreas Whitman Smith
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR: Jeremy Reed

The dream of secure jobs

In each generation a political leader rises to power by appearing to pull off a trick. For Harold Macmillan it was persuading us we had never had it so good, even as economic decline was accelerating. For Harold Wilson, arch tactician, it was persuading us he had a vision of Britain remade by the white heat of technology. For Margaret Thatcher it was making us believe individualism and enterprise had created golden years of growth in the mid-Eighties, rather than low interest rates and inflated house prices.

The trick a politician must pull hoping to command the mid-Nineties is already clear: to combine a belief in markets and competition with a commitment to provide people with a sense of security and well-being. That is the context for the G7 jobs summit that ends today in Lille, France. The paucity of good ideas has been exposed already by the descent of the debate into a ritualistic clash of two false armies, the deregulated approach of Britain and the US, against the regulated approach of continental Europe. Neither provides the answers we are looking for.

The Anglo-Saxon model of deregulated labour markets has a much better record for creating jobs than Germany or France, where unemployment is likely to rise even further in the next few years as they cut public spending to squeeze their economies into the straitjacket imposed by Economic and Monetary Union.

That does not mean our approach is without flaws. Indeed they are all too obvious. The jobs we create are invariably too low quality: low skill, poorly-paid jobs often in the service sector. This is in large part a reflection of our disastrous record in education and training, which lags far behind that of Germany and France.

Britain gets only two-thirds of its young people up to an "intermediate level" – the equivalent of five good GCSEs, while Germany gets 80 per cent up to the advanced level, equivalent to A-levels. Sir Ron Dearing's proposals to reform qualifications, published last week, are testimony to how little has been achieved on this front despite wave after wave of reform in the past decade.

Both John Major and Tony Blair have grasped that this is a theme they cannot ignore. Mr Major told the Tory faithful at

the weekend that he recognised the need to combine change with security. But he did not have much to offer and nor can we expect much. Troubling long-term issues such as the funding of higher education have been put firmly on the back burner until after the election. Mr Blair's stakeholding idea, though still dreadfully vague, is an effort to persuade people they have a stake in a society that seems to be moving beneath their feet.

A Germanic model of stakeholding, based on a strong manufacturing sector highly regulated by agreements often negotiated centrally by employers' associations and trade unions, would not work in the UK. It's a non-starter for an open, competitive, decentralised economy that is largely based on service industries in which unions have little clout. Imposing a Germanic model based on co-determination upon British companies will not work. Re-regulating the economy through the introduction of a minimum wage may help some workers in low-paid jobs but it may also reduce overall employment creation without doing much to make society fairer or work more secure. Expecting the welfare system to provide a safety net is unrealistic: voters in work will not stump up significantly more taxes to pay benefits for those out of work.

What might work, however, is stakeholding as a form of contract between the state, the individual and employers. Instead of lifetime employment with a company, there should be lifetime training, retraining, counselling and advice to help people switch careers in mid-life. These lifetime learning accounts – an idea that Labour has already picked up in part – should be contributed to by employers, the state and the worker. Mortgages and health insurance should be tailored to serve people who will be in and out of work, often on short-term contracts.

This is the trick, to combine Britain's entrepreneurial culture and service-based economy with measures of security that do not rely on heavy-handed state intervention or regulation. Either the Conservatives or the Labour Party could pull off this trick. Both are trying. They are still a long way from succeeding.

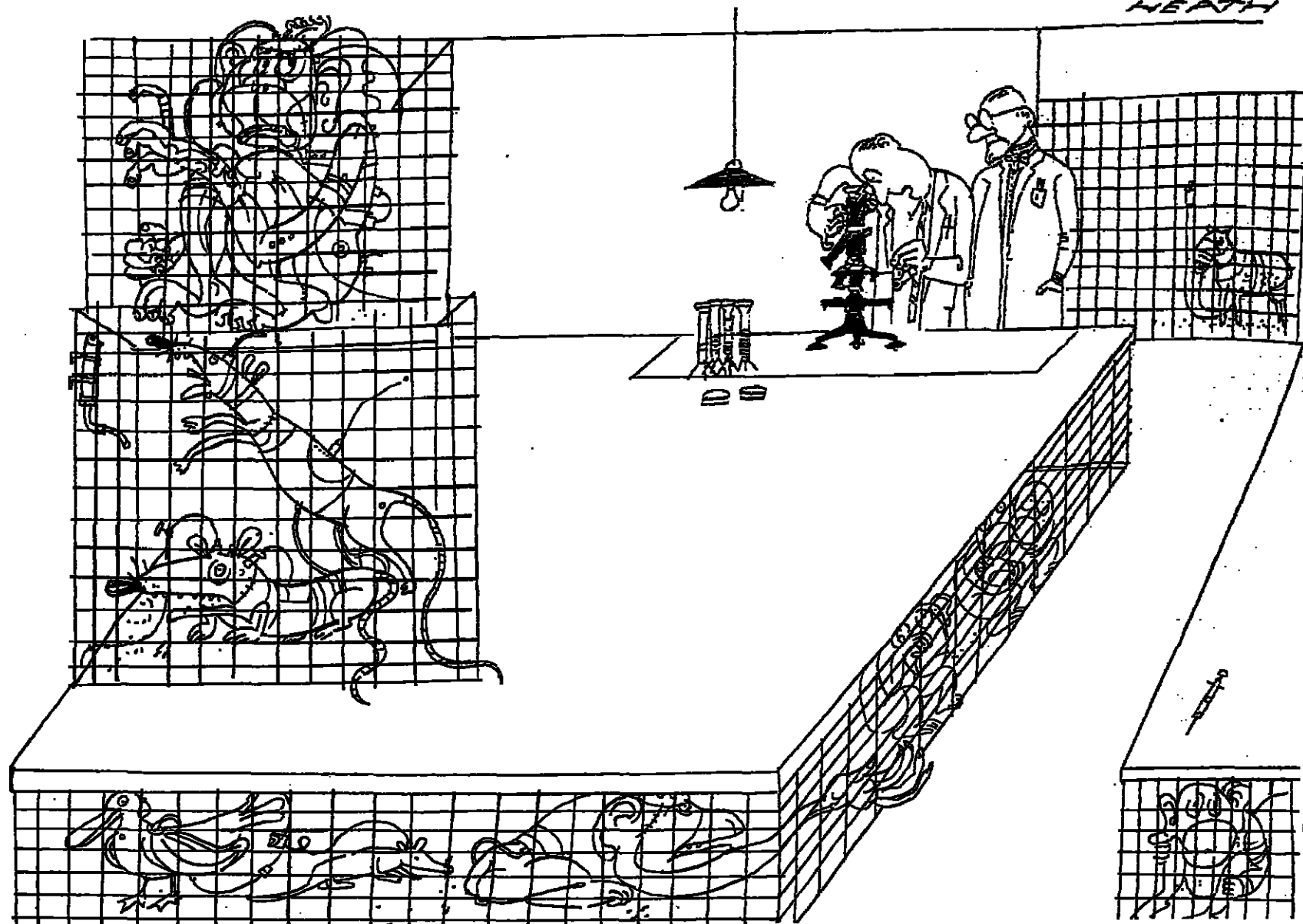
The BBC's challenge

Sir Christopher Bland, the new chairman of the BBC, is an accomplished deal-maker who demonstrates – not for the first time in British life – that in rising to the top, who you know is as important as what you know. Politically, he is a Tory trusty. His appointment in the dog days of this government may not be quite as partisan as demand immediate replacement by a Blair government but it is biased enough to give the country's non-Tory majority grounds for mild anxiety.

Except that Sir Christopher's party allegiances are far less important than his capacity to think imaginatively and strategically about non-profit broadcasting in the multi-media future. For all the policy units and advisers in suits at Broadcasting House, the BBC often produces second-rate futurology. The problem is partly the BBC leadership's almost complete inability to sell (to staff as well as the outside world) a sense of excitement about the opportunities of the rapidly changing media climate. It is also a problem of circle-squaring. The Government demands the BBC both serve this (fissiparous) nation and compete internationally with the Murdochos, CNNs and others. The objectives may be incompatible.

Let us assume Sir Christopher's footwork is nifty enough and he survives the election. His priority should not be the way the BBC is run, beyond deciding who succeeds John Birt as director-general. Sir Christopher must avoid the trivialities of the Marmaduke Hussey era. He must think strategically about the structure and culture of a business which needs both to compete and to serve.

Sir Christopher must watch television, start to listen to music radio, surf the Net and buy programmable CDs. "Broadcasting" is no longer circumscribed by a hard and fast definition. The principal public service broadcaster cannot be held responsible for a national culture pumped and shaped by global waves of technology and cultural commerce. Nor is it likely to be able to survive as it is. A good chairman of the BBC as the 21st century dawns should have one question constantly on his lips: how much longer can this anachronism persist, so admirable yet so out of date. In his previous job as chairman of London Weekend Television he came up with some very good waxes to retain talent, motivate managers and win the franchise. He will need that savvy and a lot more to succeed at the BBC.



I think I've found the next health scare!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why official theories may hide the true nuclear risks

Sir: Press coverage of last Wednesday's report from the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (Comare) gives the impression that radiation has been cleared of blame for the Seascale leukaemia cluster, because doses from Sellafield are too low. Raw sewage, we heard, is a more likely culprit.

However, official perceptions of health hazards from radiation depend crucially upon studies of the long-term effects of a single acute blast of external radiation from the Hiroshima A-bomb. There is now a large body of evidence that these studies are a poor basis for assessing health damage from chronic, low-dose exposure to radiation from man-made fission products, which may be ingested and incorporated into body tissue.

By 1958, the area around Seascale had been plastered with 5,000 becquerels per square metre of the isotope Strontium-90 – that is more than 10 times the levels of Sr-90 from nuclear weapons testing that shocked officialdom into promulgating the 1963 international test-ban treaty. We are glad to see that the

Comare report expresses reservations about "current knowledge" of radiation hazard, and admits there are "uncertainties regarding internal radiation exposures" and an "urgent need ... for improved knowledge".

In the House of Commons two days before the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster a symposium organised by the Low Level Radiation Campaign and Medact will discuss the health effects of low-dose internal radiation. We are looking for research and funding proposals such as the Comare report also calls for.

RICHARD BRAMALL
Low Level Radiation Campaign
Builth Wells, Powys

Sir: Raw sewage may have its part to play in the cluster of leukaemia found in Seascale, but having recently studied the issue, I feel that nuclear power plants play an important role in leukaemia clusters, not just in Sellafield but around the country.

Roman and her colleagues, when examining West Berkshire & Basingstoke and Hampshire district health authority data,

within which lie Aldermaston and Burghfield MoD sites, with Harwell UKAEA research establishment a few miles away, found 29 cases of leukaemia and cancers in children aged 0-4 years old where only 14 cases were expected. Goldsmith (1992), studying leukaemia incidence in the vicinity of pre-1955 installations, found 165 observations where 133 were expected from regional data and 141 expected from comparison area data.

Did Professor Bridges examine the possibility that plutonium attached to silt and mud in the sea had been washed up on local beaches and had subsequently been inhaled by children and adults alike? A few grammes of dried silt inhaled from Cumbrian estuaries is enough to satisfy the annual inhalation dose limit for adults.

CAROLINE J BUSTARD
Coventry

Sir: The fears of GPs on Benbecula about a link between Chernobyl and increased local cancer rates (report, 1 April), and the ongoing beef scare raise questions about freedom of informa-

tion, vested interests and public accountability.

The number affected by CJD is less than the number of Lottery millionaires. The Government repeatedly tells us that there is no certainty about the dangers, but has nevertheless ordered a robust response to minimise the risks.

Conversely, we have concrete evidence of the effects of radiation. In the words of the International Commission for Radiological Protection, "Any exposure to radiation may carry some risk for the development of somatic effects, including leukaemia and other malignancies and of hereditary effects." Where is the sweeping government action to eradicate the risk of radiation-induced cancer? The Government reaffirmed earlier this year that it is still not safe to eat lamb from sheep bred in parts of Britain because of a nuclear disaster which occurred 10 years ago and 1,500 miles away, and now there may be a causal link between Chernobyl and cancer rates in the British Isles.

JANET BLOOMFIELD
Chair, CND
London N7

No alternative to transferable vote

Sir: The position of the Liberal Democrats on electoral reform is unchanged. We favour the Single Transferable Vote as the system best designed to reflect fairly in Parliament the voting preferences of the electors.

Your report (1 April), which claims that I have "intimated" Liberal Democrat willingness to consider the Alternative Vote system and "suggested" modifications to it is wrong on both counts. Like others in all parties who recognise the distortions produced by the present "first past the post" voting system, I do look for cross-party support for electoral reform where it may be found, but what the reformers seek is a properly proportional system. The Alternative Vote is not that system.

ROBERT MACLENNAN MP
House of Commons

BSE: slaughter infected herds, not old cattle

Sir: I am not reassured by the government policy to exclude the meat of older cattle from the food chain. As a consumer, what I understand of the current state of knowledge is:

- 1) There may be a link between BSE and CJD.
- 2) BSE may be passable from one generation to another and may therefore be latent in young cattle.
- 3) BSE may be present throughout the meat of infected cattle through the nervous system.

4) There are a large number of herds which have never been affected by BSE.

What would reassure me is a policy of selective slaughter of infected herds and promotion of healthy ones. I spoke recently to a farmer on the island of Coll, who said that he buys his cattle from Ireland, where this selective culling policy has been in force.

I would be happy to eat his cattle but at present have no means of distinguishing it from other beef on the market.

SUSAN CARSTAIRS
Arisaig, Inverness-shire

Sir: As a poultry keeper, I must correct one statement in Andrew Marr's otherwise excellent article "Town vs Country" (29 March). Colouring in poultry feed is to give the yolks more colour. In battery hens these would be pale and insipid; the naturally golden yellow colour comes from free-range hens eating grass and other vegetation.

The shell colour is purely to do with the breed of bird. The reason for the idea that brown eggs are free-range and white are battery produced comes from the early days of battery farming, when smaller Mediterranean breeds such as white leghorns

were used, which laid white eggs naturally. By selective breeding and crossing, the modern small hybrid was produced, which lays brown eggs to satisfy consumer demand.

PAT DAVIES
Sevenoaks Weald, Kent

Sir: Beef is not the only problem. Very soon our meat will be accompanied by genetically engineered vegetables. Some of these (e.g. soya beans) have been designed to tolerate high levels of very toxic herbicides. Some (e.g. brassicas) will incorporate pyrethroid-type insecticides. Others are engineered to conceal the visible signs of rotting (tomatoes). Do we really need or want any of these? They have been bred for the convenience of the suppliers rather than the eaters.

MRS J M FASHAM
Hindhead, Surrey

Short-sighted West Bank raids

Sir: The detention of Palestinian students at Bir Zeit University (29 March) shows how depressingly little has changed on the West Bank since the Oslo accords.

The Israeli army gave as one reason for the arrests the need to round up students "staying in these areas illegally". Bir Zeit University in the West Bank offers a number of courses not available at institutions in the Gaza Strip. Under the Oslo Declaration of Principles, the Israelis pledged to treat the West Bank and Gaza as a single unit. They have not done so, and young people from Gaza who obtain university places in the West Bank are required to have special permits. These are issued for a very limited period and the authorities may then confiscate or fail to renew them.

Palestinian access to tertiary education will promote and protect the desire for peace; mass round-ups and blindfolding students will have the opposite effect. They will make young people even more susceptible to the argument by groups such as Hamas that negotiation has failed and political violence is therefore legitimate.

SARAH SMALLEY
Cambridge

Divorce: children must come first

Sir: How much I agree with Christine Roe (letter, 28 March). The Divorce Bill should be amended to create a presumption against the granting of a divorce while there are children of the marriage under 16. That presumption could be rebutted, but only against specified criteria, and after a court welfare officer had recommended that the children were more likely to be harmed by the continuance of the marriage than its dissolution.

STEPHEN G LINTSEAD
Solihull, West Midlands

Logomania

Sir: 1 April 1996 marks the start of the Welsh Year of the Logo. From Monday, 37 district councils, eight county councils, nine district health authorities, eight fire brigades and their logos all bit the dust. In their place we have 22 unitary authorities, five district health authorities and four fire brigades, all with new logos. Where were the spare tipsters calls to invest in logo designers, printers, sign writers, crest designers? It must be Wales's boom industry.

RUSSELL DEACON
Cardiff

Switch off TV addiction

Sir: Regarding Peter Popham's article, "Perils of a zap-happy life" (25 March). Up to the age of two my son became increasingly drawn to television, switching it on first thing in the morning, without bothering to eat breakfast or say good morning to his parents. It was then difficult to prise him away and the TV's noise made it impossible to listen to the radio or read a paper.

I asked my son, would he like to go and play football in the park? No, came the reply. Would he like to ride his bike in the park? No. Would he like to go swimming? No. What would he like to do? Watch television. And then one day I heard myself describe my child as hard work, when I really felt that I hardly knew him. It was clear. The TV had to go.

The first TV-free month was, in my experience of child-rearing, the hardest thing I have ever done. Weaning James off television involved organised activities, all day, every day, from early morning to bedtime and he resented the fact that the television had been removed. After about a month, however, things changed dramatically; he started to forget about the TV, mornings were relaxed and our son was conversing with us.

Getting rid of the TV was the best thing we have ever done as it gave us a period in which to adjust in peace and quiet. We now select which programmes we watch, discussing what the programme offers us, and my children watch about four hours' television per week.

LINDA BROWNING
London SE3

Sir: Peter Popham's article states the obvious – that too much TV is not good for kids. He doesn't state the other obvious – that children don't have to watch all the TV that is offered to them.

As I write at 4pm my two children, far from watching TV, are out in the pouring rain playing football. When they do watch an hour or so of TV it is to give them a break between school and their many other activities. There isn't time in a busy child's life for too much TV. It is up to the parents to ensure that the button stays off and the child does other things too.

PAULA SAUNDERS
St Albans, Hertfordshire

How Ireland got its martyrs

Sir: Perhaps more significant than the anti-Irish propaganda of Gerald of Wales (report, 20 March) was the prophetic answer he received from the Archbishop of Cashel, whom he reproached for the lack of Irish martyrs.

"It is true," said the venerable gentleman, "that although our people are very barbarous, uncivilised and savage, nevertheless they have always paid great honour and reverence to churchmen, and they have never put out their hands against the saints of God. But now a people has come to the kingdom which knows how, and is accustomed, to make martyrs. From now on Ireland will have its martyrs, just as other countries."

JEAN LAWES
Hereford

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

An open and shut-eye account of libel

How much do you know about the law? Do you always know when you are breaking it? How good a jury member would you make? Do you even think you would shine as a barrister? Well, here's a little test for you to find out. Read the account of the following fictional court case and then say what you think the verdict should be.

Once upon a time, there was a columnist of a daily newspaper, who found himself increasingly mesmerised by the performance of Michael Howard, the Home Secretary. It seemed incomprehensible to this columnist that Mr Howard should ever have been made Home Secretary, since his arrogant smugness seemed matched only by his inability to become one of the great magisterial home secretaries of all time.

The columnist was not the only one who felt that Mr Howard always seemed to be making the wrong decisions – he was constantly being told by various judges and courts that he was making the wrong decisions.

The columnist therefore felt that he was not imagining things. It was true that Mr Howard seemed to be the wrong man for the job of Home Secretary. Not only did he seem smug, arrogant and unmagisterial, but he also seemed to enjoy standing up at Tory Party conferences and making rabble-



MILES KINGSTON

rousing speeches, in which he threatened to crack down on crime using various measures, none of which appeared to be enacted, except his favourite project of building more prisons.

Mr Howard even declaimed that prison worked, although all the evidence showed the opposite. In other words, he not only seemed smug, arrogant and unmagisterial, he also seemed to have a gift for self-deception. He was also accused by various people of having knee-jerk policies – ie policies that were brought in hastily and thoughtlessly in order to appease public reaction.

Occasionally his knee-jerk reactions got him into trouble, like when he unreasonably sacked Derek Lewis, the head of the prison service, who promptly sued him for unfair dismissal. The Home Office doled out large amounts of public money to calm Mr Lewis down, a tactic

admission that Mr Howard had made a big error.

Mr Howard, however, did not admit that he had made a big error. This was because he not only seemed smug, arrogant, unmagisterial and prone to self-deception, he also seemed to be incapable of ever admitting he was wrong about anything, perhaps on the grounds that if he started admitting he was wrong about the things he had been wrong about, it would take up too much of his working day.

Most of the time the columnist wrote about other things but, from time to time, he was so incensed by the spectacle of Mr Howard that he lambasted him in print, saying that he seemed to be the most smug, arrogant, unmagisterial, self-deceiving and rabble-rousing Home Secretary since homes and secretaries were invented.

Nothing ever came of this, of course. Columnists do not change things and nobody ever pays attention to them. Even so, the columnist would sometimes lie awake at night and wonder if he had gone too far. He would always be careful to say that Mr Howard seemed to be all these things but, at the same time, he felt vaguely surprised that he had never had a libel writ from Mr Howard.

One day, the columnist decided to

ally these fears by, rather oddly, inventing a libel case. He told his readers that he had received a writ for libel from the Home Secretary, which he would be fiercely contesting.

He then proceeded to describe the details of the writ and, by and by, the progress of the court case, including the testimony of the main witnesses (who included the columnist himself) and the words of the counsel involved. He also invented Mr Howard's testimony in the witness stand – a rabble-rousing effort if ever there was one. All of this, as his readers well understood, was fictitious and frivolous. So the columnist was more than somewhat surprised to receive a real writ for libel, from Mr Howard, who claimed that he had falsely invented a libel case involving Mr Howard. Therefore, Mr Howard was suing the columnist for libel, the libel being that Mr Howard had sued the columnist for libel which, Mr Howard claimed, he had not done before although he was doing so now.

The case dragged on for weeks, and many witnesses appeared in court, including Mr Lewis.

Just as the case was coming to an end, the columnist woke up, so he never found out what the verdict would have been.

What do you think it was?

April 2015

Changing the chemistry of politics

The Liberal Democrats and Labour are edging towards agreement on reforming the voting system

Before the dam breaks, tiny, barely visible cracks appear. Over the past few days, just such a significant fissure has appeared in the smooth wall of the British party system. It isn't easy to spot, coming in the form of a hint from some unnamed Liberal Democrats about something called the Alternative Vote. It may be early, telling evidence of a bigger and more ruthless event.

But to understand why, we need to start with some tribal history. Since the first neolithic Liberal activist emerged from a dank cave full of bison bones (or since the party stopped winning general elections, at any rate) the Liberals, and then Liberal Democrats, have been committed to a particular kind of voting system, called STV. This is proportional – a long word for fair – and complicated.

It requires large constituencies, from which up to five MPs are elected. And Liberals love it, overwhelmingly, unconditionally, beyond reason – rather like small girls love Barbie and Germans love beer.

Similarly, every good Liberal is taught, at an early age, to fear and detest another kind of voting system, known as the Alternative Vote, or AV. In brief, this means that no candidate can win a seat without having more than half the votes; every voter getting second and third choices to be redistributed if necessary.

To you, dear reader, this may not seem particularly shocking. But Good Liberals regard it as akin to incest, or reading the *Daily Mail*. Because AV is not really proportional, or fair, they see it as a swindle. So the news that leading Lib Dem parliamentarians are signalling their interest in

AV is like finding Ian Paisley crouched in a confessional.

So what are they up to? They are having private conversations with the Labour Party which may lead to a dramatic reshaping of the British political system.

Up to now, the centre-right of British politics has kept itself together as "the Conservative Party", while the centre-left has often been divided. This simple fact has shaped 20th-century Britain – its hierarchies of power, its distribution of wealth, its distinctive and unusual class system. The eclipse of the Liberal Party by Labour, and later Labour splits, helped to ensure that, despite the achievements of the post-war Attlee government, this has been fairly called "the Conservative century".

The great question for Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown is whether they can change the basic chemistry of party politics to fuse the centre-left and divide the centre-right. Proportional representation might have that effect. If Blair believes there is a welfare state, pro-Europe majority in the country, he could, just possibly, unite it under his personal leadership in a way that the Tories would then find very difficult to shift.

Even without that, both opposition parties see the advantages of campaigning on the theme of "all Britain against the Tories". No one is seriously suggesting an electoral pact. But a campaign which saw Labour and Lib Dem politicians repeating similar policy ideas and arguments – and avoiding attacks in one another – would convey a new message.

One version of such a deal would work like this. Blair, already commit-



ANDREW MARR

Tony Blair knows that the potential rewards are enormous

ted to a referendum on voting reform, accepts that he cannot go through a general election without saying whether or not he favours change. He takes a deep breath and says that, on balance, he thinks we do need a fairer system, thus demolishing the biggest remaining policy difference between the parties.

But which system might he change to? STV would mean redrawing every constituency boundary. It would be fiercely fought not only by the Conservatives but also by very many Labour MPs. The other main system is a "list" system, which continues with single constituencies but adds extra Members from central party lists and is detested at Westminster because it would create two classes of MPs.

Though there are endless hybrids and variants, the other main system is AV. Its effect would be very different from STV. One projection of the 1992 results by the London School of

Economics implies very little change. Under the AV system, the Tories would have had 11 fewer MPs than John Major actually won; Labour would have had one less and the Lib Dems would have had 10 more.

Under STV, by contrast, the Tories would have fallen by 80, and the Lib Dems would have rocketed up. Such figures are speculative and not universally accepted – Vernon Bogdanor, who has devoted more time to the subject than almost anyone, disputes the very modest AV projections.

But however you play it, the difference between AV and STV is dramatic, the difference between redecoration and demolition. During the past two attempts to change the system, in 1977/1978 and in 1981, the pro-change case fell partly because of bickering between supporters of AV and STV. This time, change would probably be dependent on Labour and the Liberal Democrats agreeing which system they could live with.

Hence the significance of any Liberal Democrat tilt towards the once-despised AV. They may hope that once Blair has started moving, his own logic will drive him further. But they seem prepared to do business. One reason is given by a Liberal Democrat candidate writing in a party magazine, *The Reformer*.

"There are very few seats where we come a good second to the Labour Party, suggesting that if we don't make significant gains this time, it is going to be an awful lot harder next time. ... There appear to be very few seats that will easily fall our way by attacking Blair," he wrote.

There would be no talk of a formal

coalition or of cabinet seats for Liberal Democrats. But the party would urge voters to vote tactically against the Conservatives, and get similar support from Labour, thus maximising the anti-Tory mood. And if Blair won, the Lib Dems would support him in Parliament on issues including Scottish home rule, a bill of rights and perhaps education reform, while helping to offset the Labour left on issues like Europe.

There are plenty of senior Labour people who view such a deal with deep suspicion. After years of trying to keep the lid on Labour's spending plans, for instance, Gordon Brown would not relish trying to defend Liberal Democrat expenditure commitments, which he is known to regard as wildly over the top.

But Blair is clearly intrigued by the thought of spreading his "project" widely enough across the spectrum to give him 10 or 15 years in power rather than a Labour leader's usual four or five. He talks eloquently about pluralism. He has focused his objections to voting reform on the possibility of extremist parties gaining seats, and on support for the single-member constituency; both of these are objections which, as he must know perfectly well, could be answered by AV or a list system.

He is, in short, doing some serious thinking. Blair knows that the balance of probability is that he can win on his own; that he doesn't need to take this risk. But he also knows that the potential rewards are enormous. And as the man said, flashing an immodest smile at a press conference last week, he's always believed in upping the stakes.

Gels just want to have fun

The Season opens tonight, but debutantes want unwedded bliss not marriage, says Libby Spurrier

The origins of the London social season go back 216 years, to a royal birthday present. In 1780, for her 36th birthday, George III gave his wife, Queen Charlotte, a party at which the newest and prettiest girls in town were presented to her. This charming and (at that time) novel idea became the launch pad of the London "Season". The girls, known as debutantes (from the French for "beginner") were formally presented to the sovereign, after which they floated off like a flock of young swans on the waters of London's social life. The significant fact was that they had seen their sovereign face to face: proud fathers and fussy mothers had been identified ("yes, she's one of the *Yorkshire Swales*") people would say for ever afterwards, and the girl could now head serenely for the Sea of Matrimony.

Until the end of the 19th century, there were only between 5,000 and 10,000 members of the titled classes and landed gentry, and most people lived within horse-and-carriage range of only a few dozen; hence the need to come to London to command a decent selection of marriage partners. Money and property have always been important elements in a "good marriage" – see Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* – but connections, or what the aristocracy called "cousinage", were even more vital. Being well born was more important than being well heeled.

Between 1780 and 1930, the shape and purpose of the Season remained basically unchanged. A family that was too poor, or disinclined, to accompany its fledgling to London for three months (from May till the start of the grouse-shooting season) could use a chaperone to drag her from ballroom to ballroom. Originally, this might be a married sister or an unmarried aunt, though in due course the practice was corrupted and paid chaperones were used – but always sneered at.

A marriage market is, in truth, what the Season has always been about – which is why, today, it has become no more than an illusion. Few "gels" are docile enough to take much notice of their parents' wishes in the matter of a husband, and even among the upper classes, the practice of cohabitation has taken hold.

For pretty, witty, confident girls the season could be highly enjoyable; but then, for girls like that most things are. For those unfortunates who were

stiff, plain, bookish or simply gauche, the Season was a nightmare. Debs from the Thirties remember spending half the night in the ladies' powder room, pretending to stitch a fallen hem rather than face the ordeal of a dance floor full of strangers. Today's more assertive young women would be more likely to retire to the ladies' powder room for quite another sort of powder. Times have changed, and with them the Season.

The fundamental change is that a woman's sole destiny no longer has to be a lifetime of marriage and breeding – first children; then dogs and horses. Two world wars have trans-

formed the social landscape. During both wars many young women worked in hospitals, and in the second, served in the armed forces. They found that even lowly and harrowing work could be more satisfying than marriage and domesticity, however grand. In any case, there is always a shortage of eligible young men and a superfluity of heart-broken young women in the aftermath of war.

Finally, the class structure was changing and with it the money basis of the aristocracy. The upper classes were getting poorer; many could no longer afford to spend tens of thousands of pounds in search of a suitable husband for an increasingly rebellious daughter. For all these reasons, what today purports to be the Season is a shadow of its former reality. True, there are still events such as the Berkeley Dress Show, which opens the Season tonight, and Queen Charlotte's Ball, but these have to advertise for recruits in girls' boarding schools, and are laboriously padded out to life by an army of snobbish PRs. In reality, these have become occasions at which rich businessmen make good contacts while their wives try to set up a future social life against the empty days when their daughters have flown the coop – most probably not into matrimony at all, but to go backpacking in Nepal, share a flat in Fulham or even to live in unwedded bliss with some quite unsuitable fellow.

The Real World fights back

Today, an extraordinary coalition will challenge the Earth's enemies: pollution, poverty and paralysis. Paul Valley reports on a movement that aims to rewrite party politics

It is not, says Jonathon Porritt, a new political party. Definitely not.

You might be forgiven for thinking otherwise. Today, in that establishment hinterland between Whitehall and St James's, Mr Porritt and fellow travellers will launch Real World, a political grouping with suggestions to make on everything from tax rises, crime and unemployment to traffic pollution, stress at work and poverty in the Third World.

But if – unlike Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party – they will not be putting up candidates at the next general election, Porritt & Co make no secret of their intention to change the nature of the political debate in Britain in the run-up to the election so that a different set of issues comes to the fore.

It may not be an idle intention. Real World is a coalition of 32 campaigning charities and pressure groups which between them already claim more than 2.1 million supporters.

"People instinctively know that British politics is not at present facing up to the challenge of the real world," says Mr Porritt. "Politicians ask why the feelgood factor hasn't returned," adds another of the coalition's leading lights, the economist Michael Jacobs, research fellow at the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change. "It is because people are not feeling good about the society in which they live."

"Politicians make the mistake of talking about the standard of living entirely in terms of how much money people have in their pockets after tax. But quality of life is different from standard of living. Having more disposable income does not buy you out of the problems caused by crime, air pollution, traffic congestion, stress at work and job insecurity. In the real world – in which ordinary people live – the quality of life seems to be falling in many areas, and not just for the poor but for ordinary, average-income people. We need a new kind of political debate to address that."

Those who have joined Real World are not just environmentalists. Members include Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, Transport 2000, the Employment Policy Institute, Save the Children Fund, the Town and Country Planning Association, Population Concern, the World Wide Fund for

Nature, Christian Aid, Charter 88, and Church Action on Poverty.

The project has been four years gestating. It began after the last election when Mr Porritt and others had "a sense of near despair" that issues of the environment and international development disappeared utterly from the political agenda once a general election was called. Determined that this should not happen next time, he and close colleagues gathered together campaigners from various backgrounds who had never before worked together. The environmentalists were gradually joined by aid agencies, then advocates of constitutional reform and then groups involved with poverty in the UK.

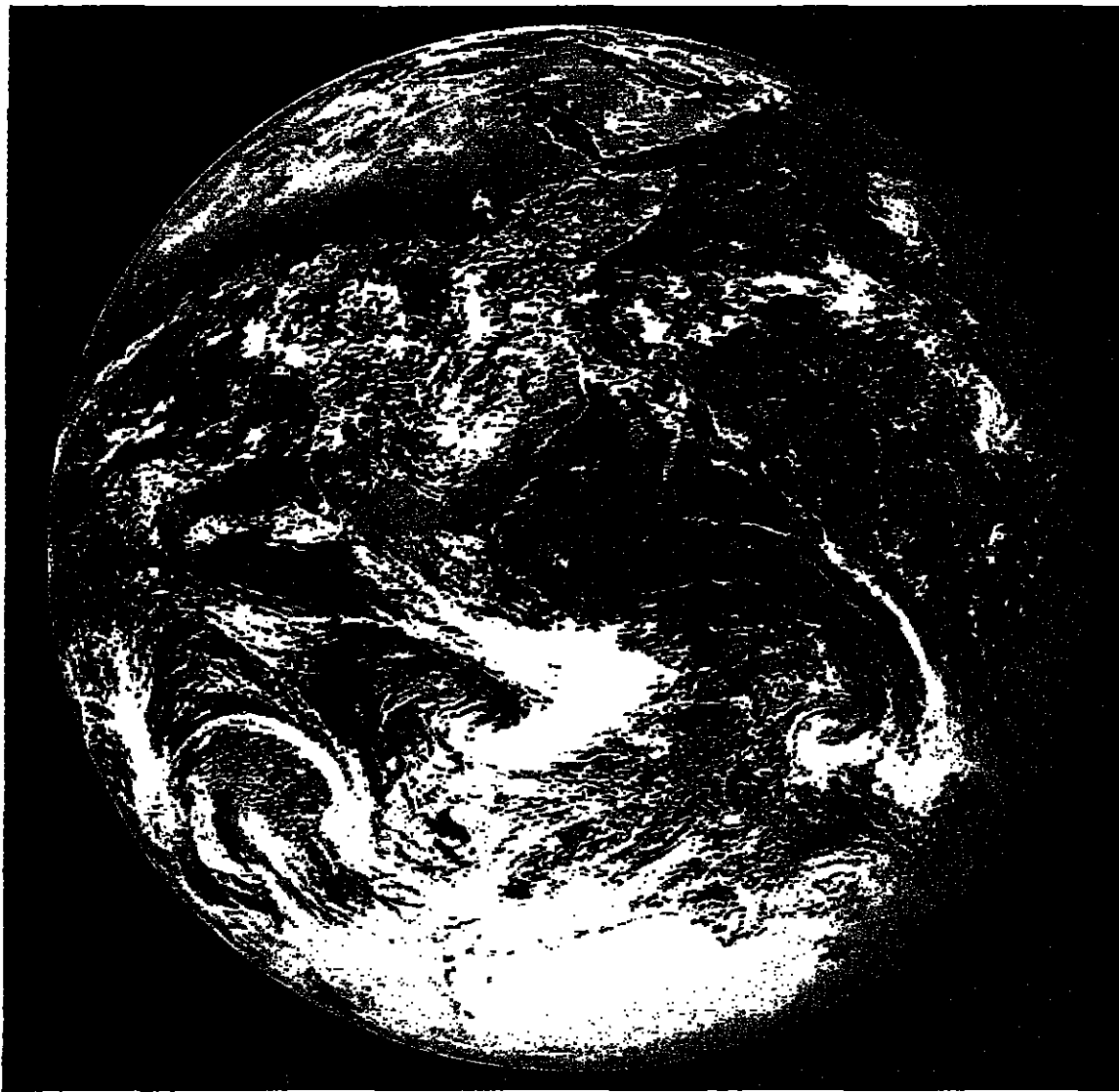
They compared poverty in the Third World with that in the UK, examined how constitutional issues related to social justice, asked what community meant in a modern world, contrasted the ecological and social justice agendas and formulated the "standard of living versus quality of life" debate.

"We concluded," says Mr Porritt, "that if you don't set up the circumstances in which people can achieve a decent quality of life, you can forget the natural world at home and abroad. Social justice and sustainability are inextricably wedded. Without, we became convinced that without democratic renewal and constitutional reform there is no way to move the agenda through our atrophied political systems."

It is ironic that a period which has seen a rapid decline in membership of political parties, in favour of single-issue pressure groups, should end

'If you can't help people to achieve a decent quality of life, you can forget the natural world'

with the single-issue people becoming convinced of the inter-relatedness of their agendas. In part, that is a response to the globalisation of the world economy: financial deregulation and increased cross-border activity by multinational companies has meant that the problems of one sector impact more visibly on others; much single-issue lobbying of single companies looks fragmented and desultory. But



it also stems from a conviction that – on both sides – the mainstream political debate is too limited.

"Take unemployment," argues Mr Jacobs. "Labour says it's about education and training and the Tories say it's about more flexible labour markets. Neither of those convinces anybody. We're saying we're not going to

subsidies for the long-term unemployed, more social housing, more and better-targeted aid to the Third World and a fiscally neutral reform package shifting tax from jobs (they want to abolish National Insurance) to pollution, waste, energy and transport. More controversially, they talk about increases in income tax. All of which sounds pretty much like a party political programme. Mr Porritt insists not. "We're not putting up candidates; we're not aiming to endorse candidates," he says. "And we'll use our analytical and campaigning skills to work with all parties. This agenda has to be driven in an all-party fashion. If it's the preserve of any one party, you automatically set every other party against you. What we're trying to do – at its most ambitious – is to change the framework within which parties do battle with each other."

Not everyone is convinced. Greenpeace has declined to join; publicly because its policy is not to enter coalitions, but privately because it doubts

More to libraries than getting wired

ANOTHER VIEW

Gillian Cross

The Department of National Heritage must ensure that we have a coherent national electronic information network, not an *ad hoc* patchwork. The Library Association's Millennium bid indicates one way forward, with its scheme to connect every library in the country to the Internet. Once all libraries are networked, the possibilities are enormous. People will no longer physically have to visit the library building. Information can be made available down the line to businesses and to individual students.

But that does not mean the death of

the library as a physical place. In a multicultural, multi-faith society, the library building provides an important social centre for everyone, offering not merely information, but friendly, professional advice. All kinds of people can meet on an equal footing. We should build on our infrastructure of 4,000 public libraries and use them for

exhibitions, for community activities and for advice centres. They could become places where people meet the mentors who will help them to plan their learning throughout their lives. They could provide suitably informal centres for assessment of that learning and the awarding of qualifications. The opportunities are there to be seized. Wiring up libraries does not mean the end of book-borrowing, either. For the foreseeable future, a great part of what people want to read will still be found in books. We must ensure that libraries have a comprehensive stock.

All this will need money. But what is required, above all, is vision. Previous Secretaries of State for National Heritage have failed public libraries by largely ignoring them, and so making them politically invisible. They have given the impression that libraries are dull. Libraries are not dull. They play a crucial part in our national life, culture and economy. If Mrs Bottomley understands that, and proclaims it with fervour and commitment, she will put libraries at the top of everyone's agenda. We must all hope that she does not let us down.

The writer is a children's author and a member of the Government's Advisory Council on Libraries.

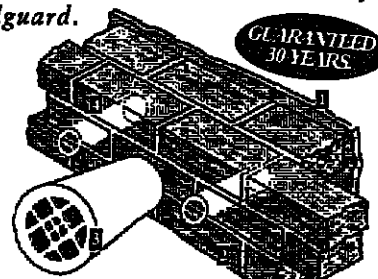
RISEING DAMP?

TACKLE IT WITH WALLGUARD

A SYSTEM IN PRACTICE FOR OVER 60 YEARS

The Wallguard ceramic tube system of damp proofing has been in use in ancient and famous buildings for many years. A prime example is Westminster Abbey in which the system was first fitted in 1932 – and was recently added to by Wallguard.

- No internal plaster disturbed
- Suitable for any type of wall finish
- Vent plate available in white or brown to match wall
- Ceramic tubes tailor made to fit any thickness of wall



You can have the Wallguard system installed in your home to combat rising damp or replace a conventional damp proof course that has failed. Since Wallguard is normally fitted from the outside, internal wall surfaces and decorations need not be disturbed – unless they are already badly affected. Brick, Stone, Granite etc. Whatever thickness of wall we can do it.

Contact Wallguard today. Local Authority & Building Society Approved

NO MAINTENANCE NO MESS NO FUSS

Also ask about our condensation and mould control service.

WALLGUARD

YOU'RE HOME AND DRY

For further details or to arrange for a survey

PHONE US FREE ON 0800 508608

fill in the coupon – no postage required: Wallguard Manchester M16 5HR.

☐ My chemical injection has failed ☐ No existing damp proof course

☐ Conventional damp proof course has failed ☐ Condensation Control

☐ I would like to eliminate damp once and for all

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone _____ Postcode _____

Send to: WALLGUARD, FREEPOST MR 5787, MANCHESTER M16 5HR.

Everyone who cares about this country should be waiting, with bated breath, for Virginia Bottomley's statement, expected this week, on the future of public libraries. Libraries can't simply be maintained as they are. If they do not develop quickly to provide what we need in the next century, they will be marginalised and decline. Mrs Bottomley must make it plain that public libraries are for everyone. Used by 60 per cent of the population – not just by particular social groups – not just by children, pensioners and the unemployed – they must continue to provide a first-class service for life-long learning. Without that, our national ability to respond to change will be severely restricted.

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2530 fax 0171-293 2098

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

Bell in \$17bn tie-up with Pacific as merger mania hits

JOHN WILLCOCK

The gates opened to a new wave of mega-mergers in the US telecommunications sector yesterday as SBC Telecommunications and Pacific Telesis Group agreed to merge in a \$16.7bn (£1.1bn) deal, becoming the second-largest company in the sector behind AT&T.

The joining of the two regional Baby Bell phone companies is the most dramatic deal since Congress deregulated the industry on 8 February, and analysts believe it is a harbinger of similar gigantic combinations to come.

SBC said the merger would create the second-largest telecommunications company by market value in the US, and the merger is the first of its kind between two former Bell System companies. The merger gives the companies greater size and financial power to offer a

broader range of services, something made possible by the law. The two companies are among seven formed from the 1984 break-up of the old Bell System monopoly. Together, they serve the two largest states, California and Texas, and will have 30 million phone lines.

The merged company will be roughly two-thirds owned by original SBC shareholders. The business will have more than 100,000 employees, revenues of over \$21bn, operating cash flow of \$9bn, and income of almost \$3bn. The two former Bell System companies serve more than 30 million access lines.

Whitacre Jr. Pacific Telesis chairman and chief executive Phil Quigley will become vice-chairman. The merged company will be roughly two-thirds owned by original SBC shareholders. The business will have more than 100,000 employees, revenues of over \$21bn, operating cash flow of \$9bn, and income of almost \$3bn. The two former Bell System companies serve more than 30 million access lines.

Although local Bell phone companies were not previously banned from combining, long-distance companies were stopped from merging with cable companies and vice versa. Cable companies were also banned from offering phone services. All these prohibitions were swept away last month, creating a new bout of "merger mania."

Mr Quigley said yesterday: "In this new competitive environment, customer satisfaction, a strong market presence, efficient and lower-cost operations, a substantial financial base and quality and innovative services will be crucial to success in the marketplace."

Under the deal Pacific Telesis shareholders will receive 0.733 shares of SBC stock for each of their shares. Based on last week's stock prices, Pacific Telesis shareholders would receive SBC stock worth about \$39 per share. When complete, SBC shareholders would own about 66 per cent of the combined company and 34 per cent would be held by Pacific Telesis investors.

The corporate headquarters for the combined company will be in San Antonio, Texas, where SBC has been based since 1993. The San Francisco area, home of Pacific Telesis, will be the headquarters for the company's long-distance operation. Inter-

Carlton and Mirror 'set to bid for TV football'

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Carlton Communications and Mirror Group are prepared to bid up to £200m a year for the right to broadcast Premiership football matches after 1997, sources close to the Premier League said last night.

Carlton's chief executive, Michael Green, and Mirror Group's Kelvin MacKenzie, head of the company's television operations, are scheduled to meet next week to discuss their attempt to wrest the contract from Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

Mirror Group, which owns 45 per cent of the Independent, declined to comment last night. Carlton did not return calls.



Eye on the ball: Michael Green of Carlton

"We don't have any comment to make on meetings that may or may not be scheduled," a spokesman for the Premier League said last night. "The Premier League has an open mind as to the future, and there have been a lot of expressions of interest."

Separately, Pearson and MAI, which have also been rumoured to be interested in bidding for football rights, are believed to have dropped their plans. The two media companies looked at the prospect in earnest late last year.

Some senior industry sources dismissed the prospect of a bid from Carlton and Mirror Group. "The two companies haven't got the money, and they haven't got the 'shelf space' on television to broadcast the matches," said one.

It is understood the two media companies plan to offer a pay-TV deal to broadcast Premier League matches on cable, but are considering a side deal with the ITV network to show certain matches on terrestrial television.

Carlton controls two ITV licences: Carlton (weekday in London) and Central, and is believed to be considering expanding its small UK cable operations, currently limited to control of SelectTV, the cable-only entertainment channel it bought earlier this year. The company has been rumoured as a potential bidder for Mirror Group, but it is now thought co-operation on the television front may be more likely.

Mirror operates the money-losing LiveTV, a national entertainment channel, and publishes profitable newspapers including the Daily Mirror. It is expected that the two companies would use the newspapers to promote the Premier League service if their bid was successful.

The two companies have not ruled out offering a subsidiary deal to BSkyB, which holds the exclusive rights to the Premiership until 1997, in order to provide matches for satellite subscribers as well.

The current £304m, five-year deal between the League and BSkyB is scheduled to run out at the end of next season. But negotiations to renew the contract, or to entertain rival bids, are expected to start in earnest later this year. BSkyB has pre-emptive rights to match any competing bid. However, the terms of its deal with the League are currently the subject of an inquiry by the Office of Fair Trading, and the company could have regulatory difficulties in the future.

In addition, it is believed that the European Commission is closely watching Premier League developments in the UK, and may insist that any renewal of the contract be limited to a period of two years.

Broadcasting is evolving rapidly in the UK, with digital services planned for as early as next year. The winner of the next Premier League contract could benefit from the expansion in the number of channels available in the digital age.



On a roll: Jonathan Fry, chief executive (right), and finance director Brian Hardy celebrating a 15 per cent profits surge Photograph: Tony Buckingham

Far East boosts Burmah Castrol

TOM STEVENSON
City Editor

Soaring demand for Castrol lubricants in the buoyant economies of the Far East kept profits on a roll at Burmah Castrol last year. Volume growth of more than 20 per cent in markets from India to Vietnam more than made up for sluggish conditions in the mature markets of Europe and the US.

That growth confirmed the wisdom of the group's decision to focus the bulk of its marketing spend on the fast growing markets of the Pacific Rim. One of British business's most

successful exporters to Asia, Burmah raised eyebrows last year when it took 150 of its most senior managers to China for a strategy conference. Profits, which jumped 15 per cent before tax from £219.5m to £253m, also benefited from the decision in the middle of 1995 to pull out of petrol retailing in the UK, where a vicious price war has sent profits tumbling at Burmah's former rivals. The sale of the business for £83m to Frost Group was made just before the price war broke out in earnest.

Lawrence Urquhart, chairman, said: "As we enter 1996, Asia remains buoyant while South America exhibits signs of recovery. However, subdued market conditions are evident in the developed markets of Europe and North America, although activity is forecast to pick up later in the year."

After a 17 per cent increase in earnings per share from 57.3p to 66.9p, the dividend increased 12 per cent to 36.25p. Burmah remains dominated by its Castrol lubricants business, where profits increased by 13 per cent to £204.3m. That reflected a 5 per cent volume improvement as the company continued to take share of a global market growing at only

about 1 per cent a year. Although car ownership around the world is growing fast, modern vehicles use much less oil. In Europe, flat consumer markets were offset to an extent by strong industrial demand and profits, up 17 per cent to £105.4m, were also given a lift by trading up, where consumers are prepared to swap regular lubricants for higher margin synthetic products. In North America, consumer demand actually fell slightly as retailers added to the gloom by de-stocking.

The Asian story remains bright, however, with profits up 14 per cent to £70.9m. Reflecting the importance of the region, which is expected to overtake Europe in volume terms soon, the Far East management has been relocated from Swindon to Hong Kong at a cost of £2m.

The other main bright spot came from the formerly troubled chemicals arm, where profits jumped 28 per cent to £62.4m after a particularly strong first half carried the division through a progressively difficult year. The group's target return on sales of 10 per cent was almost matched with an underlying margin of 9 per cent achieved.

UK output shows steep decline

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Latest figures show Britain's manufacturing industry on the verge of a slump, just as the high street is showing signs of recovering the elusive "feel-good" factor lost in the last recession.

UK manufacturers saw output drop in March to its lowest level since October 1992, the seventh month in a row when production has been either flat or falling, according to Britain's purchasing managers. Meanwhile, the amount of notes and coins circulating in the economy - seen as a good measure of consumer spending - edged up 1.5 per cent in the first quarter, suggesting people are increasingly confident about splashing out on high street goods.

The figures were seen as reinforcing expectations of a continuing slow-down in the economy, increasing the prospects for a further cut in interest rates from their current 6 per cent.

But most economists yesterday held to the line that rates, cut three times in the past three months, were more likely to move in May than following tomorrow's meeting between Bank of England Governor Eddie George and Chancellor of the Exchequer Kenneth Clarke.

MMC delivers an early verdict on power firms

MICHAEL HARRISON

Trade Secretary Ian Lang has received reports on the bids for Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity by National Power and PowerGen, fuelling speculation that another bout of takeover activity is about to hit the sector.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission delivered its verdict on the two bids to Lang's office on Friday - a week earlier than expected - and an announcement is expected in the next few weeks.

Shares in all four power companies rose as the market bet that both bids would be cleared although with conditions attached to prevent the two generators wielding undue influence in the market.

In return for approval, the generators have volunteered to ring fence their generation and supply activities, guarantee transparency in pricing and ensure that the market for contracts is sufficiently liquid to prevent them from rigging the electricity pool.

Should the two bids be waved through there is speculation that it will re-ignite interest in the remaining independent RECs from foreign utilities and electricity companies. Eight of the 12 RECs will have been swallowed up by rival UK utilities or large overseas operators if the bids by National Power and PowerGen go through.

It would also result in a sharp increase in vertical integration of generation and supply - reversing the way the industry was broken up on privatisation in 1990.

PowerGen has already agreed to sell 2,000 megawatts of plant to Hanson, which now owns Eastern Electricity while Hanson is among four bidders short-listed by National Power for 4,000 megawatts of capacity it must sell off.

The two generators have argued in evidence to the MMC that this, along with Scottish Power's takeover of Manweb, has created the precedent for vertical integration within the industry.

Comment, page 19

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low
FTSE 100	3718.40	+18.70	+0.5	3781.30	3639.50
FTSE 250	4326.90	+0.20	+0.0	4326.90	3300.90
FTSE 350	1871.20	+7.40	+0.4	1889.00	1482.40
FT Small Cap	2096.30	+0.85	+0.0	2096.30	1678.61
FT All Share	1850.22	+6.78	+0.4	1864.59	1469.23
New York	5611.71	+24.57	+0.4	5683.60	3832.08
Tokyo	21590.39	+153.54	+0.7	21580.39	14485.40
Hong Kong	10926.84	-30.38	-0.3	11194.48	6967.93
Frankfurt	2489.09	+3.22	+0.1	2525.42	1910.96

INTEREST RATES					
Short sterling*					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	2 Year
UK	5.94	6.44	8.11	8.42	8.21
US	5.38	5.63	6.33	7.14	6.66
Japan	0.52	0.84	1.75	3.41	-
Germany	3.25	3.41	6.40	7.10	7.13

CURRENCIES					
\$/£					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Dollars	
\$/£ (London)	1.5254	-0.11c	1.6169	£ (London)	0.6566
\$/£ (New York)	1.5250	-0.15c	1.6166	£ (New York)	0.6557
DM/£ (London)	2.2623	+0.06c	2.2187	DM/£ (New York)	1.4832
¥/£ (London)	184.013	+0.983	139.356	¥/£ (New York)	107.525
€ (London)	93.6	+0.2	85.0	€ (New York)	96.0

media marketing & sales

All the latest news for media, marketing and sales professionals with three pages of new positions on offer

See pages 20 - 22 section two

To book your advertisement call James Cooper on 0171 293 2301

Every Tuesday in the THE INDEPENDENT section two

APR 2 1996

Shake-up of water industry proves damp squib

COMMENT

So much for the promised radical shake-up of our water industry. What was heralded in the weekend press as the biggest has in practice turned out to be something of a damp squib.

Even judged against the water industry's somewhat soporific Richter scale of events, this one would be hard pressed to register much more than one. If the cause of the weekend's sensation was John Gummer's propaganda machine, then he must have intended it as an April Fool's joke. The Environment Secretary's proposals for "increased customer choice" add up to little more than a hill of beans.

What the Government wants, and what it is going to get, are two very different things. Its starting point is that prices are too high and that the best way of redressing this is through competition. With modern technology and operating systems, Mr Gummer believes, it should be perfectly possible to develop "common carriage", allowing competitors to supply water within the franchise of an existing operator. Great. So we can look forward to the type of competition that already exists in telecommunications and is fast being developed for gas and electricity, can we? Well, not quite. Common carriage is to be confined initially to customers using 250 megalitres of water a year or more - that's only about 600 nationwide. And in practice using alternative water suppliers is only likely to be economic for those located

close to the borders of the present water regions, reducing the number of potential beneficiaries still further.

With all the other monopoly utilities, competition has begun with big industrial users and only slowly progressed to domestic customers. But if Mr Gummer really believes this experience can be repeated with water, he's living in cloud-cuckoo land. For competition to work in any meaningful way would require the development of a national grid similar to the one that exists for gas, electricity and telecommunications. The Government has already examined the feasibility of such a project and found it to be uneconomic, both in terms of construction and running costs.

Furthermore, the ecological effect of digging up the land and diverting water on the scale required make it extremely unlikely except in the case of persistent drought conditions that such a thing could ever be sanctioned. For most industries, dynamic competition will always be the best safeguard against abuse. But for water, tough and effective regulation remains the only realistic option.

Triumphalism at Lille backfires

By any standards, Britain's performance at the G7 jobs summit in Lille yesterday was a lamentable one. Ministers were hop-

ing the event would provide further international acclaim for Britain's model of a deregulated labour market. With even the Germans and French coming round to the view that deregulation creates jobs, it was not an unreasonable thing to expect.

But as so often occurs at events of this sort these days, ministers managed to undermine support for their position with an uncompromising and ridiculously triumphant approach to the problem.

The clash that emerged was not so much over the rights and wrongs of a deregulated labour market as about degree. To the Europeans, unfettered deregulation ignores the need to remedy the social exclusion resulting from unemployment. It also raises the risk of an unacceptable beggar my neighbour to lower living standards between countries.

To complete the rift, Britain's European partners have the single currency on their minds. They suspect Britain will use its social chapter and single currency opt out to take advantage of low standards, low wages and a low exchange rate, giving it an unfair edge within Europe.

The Government's dismissive reaction to these fears is a product of its strategy for dealing with the issue of job insecurity so successfully tapped by the Labour Party. This is a bad tactic.

It is bad enough that the British were unable to resist a spot of triumphalism in Lille. Officials were handing out a Department for Employment and Education pro-

paganda document which stretched credibility about the Government's record on jobs through its selective presentation of the facts. The Japanese and Americans, with considerably lower unemployment, managed more subtle diplomacy.

More than that, the British refusal to accept that its partners might have a point, and engage in discussion about it, undermines the value of the most important economic policy forum. It will eventually marginalise our influence. Although all those present in Lille have an eye on their domestic audience, most did not feel compelled to sacrifice genuine discussion at the altar of party politics.

Greed could still short-circuit electricity

The only thing that now looks like short-circuiting a further round of consolidation in the electricity industry is an outbreak of excessive greed at Midlands Electricity and Southern Electric or pusillanimity on the part of PowerGen and National Power. These being privatised utilities, neither eventuality can be ruled out entirely. But if the script goes to plan then the Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, should clear the bids by the generators for the two regional electricity companies.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission delivered its verdict last Friday and the betting in the market is for clearance sub-

ject to certain conditions. Ministers may, understandably, be wary about endorsing anything that smacks of concentration of power in the sector, having broken the link between generation and supply when the industry was privatised.

But they conceded the principle of vertical integration when they allowed Scottish Power to buy Marne.

And they further weakened their case when they agreed to let Hanson first buy Eastern Electricity and then start acquiring power stations from the two big generators.

The case against permitting the two latest mergers is that National Power and PowerGen would be able to rig the electricity pool, the wholesale market for England and Wales, and exert undue influence on the market for contracts between generators and suppliers. Both these objections can be met by legally binding undertakings.

The bigger issue for ministers to address is what shape they want the industry in as it heads towards full competition in 1998. The consumer is more likely to be better protected by four or five large integrated players slugging it out for their business than a larger number of independent RECs with a vested interest in sitting on their local monopolies.

Midlands and Southern could spoil it all by demanding that their suitors come back with unacceptable prices. But if that were to happen they would be as much the losers as the two generators.

BET starts week of crucial talks to woo investors

RUSSELL HOTTEN

BET begins a round of crucial meetings with institutional investors this week in a bid to reverse a growing belief in the city that Rentokil is close to winning its £1.9bn takeover.

John Clark, BET chief executive, hopes he can stop the steady selling of the company's shares which has depressed the price and left it stubbornly just above the value of Rentokil's offer.

BET's advisers are believed to feel frustrated that the "positive news" contained in its defence documents has yet to be fully understood by the institutions.

Fidelity, which owned more than 5 per cent of BET at the start of the bid, is thought to have reduced its holding of 50 million shares to 18 million.

"Fidelity is selling a million every other day. That is why the price is depressed," one BET source said.

Fidelity is believed to have bought its shares for around 90p-100p, and has been making a big profit on the sales.

Arbitrageurs from America are said to have been heavy buyers of the shares being sold by London institutions.

With BET shares at 204p, up 1p yesterday, they remain about 1p above Rentokil's cash and shares offer, an indication that



Promises: Clive Thompson remains unimpressed

BET believes its lacklustre share price is not the issue at this stage in the bid. "This is just the beginning for us. The important thing is now to get around the institutions," a spokesman said.

Rentokil yesterday said it had received acceptances totalling 3.42 per cent. Clive Thompson, chief executive, said: "Rentokil's offer for BET is now entering its closing stages. During the past six weeks BET has made a number of statements, further promises, and has used the occasion to launch this season's new spring structure. We at Rentokil have not been impressed."

But Rentokil believes BET has very little left in its defence to convince shareholders of its case. BET yesterday issued a dividend forecast for next year of at least a 20 per cent growth to 6.15p. This follows the 5.1p already forecast for the current financial year, which ended on Friday.

Rentokil said the forecast had little credibility, as it was the current board that cut the dividend in 1992 and 1993, despite promises to the contrary. BET said the company was being restructured in the early 1990s but was now on a growth path.

BET has until Friday, day 39 of the bid, to publish any further information material to its defence.

Fifield sells Thorn-EMI options before demerger

MATHEW HORSMAN and RUSSELL HOTTEN

James Fifield, the millionaire senior executive at Thorn-EMI, has made £1.3m on share options in advance of the demerger of the company this summer.

Mr Fifield exercised options on 139,000 shares, roughly a third of those over which he

holds rights, on Friday, according to a statement made to the Stock Exchange. Mr Fifield, who is president of EMI, the music business, was paid salary and bonuses last year of £6.4m.

A Thorn-EMI spokesman said Mr Fifield "had the opportunity to exercise his options under existing arrangements and elected to do so".

The company's remuneration committee is considering how to roll over current options once the demerger of the rentals and music company is completed.

Thereafter, executives will be provided with a new performance-related scheme.

Sir Colin Southgate, the company chairman, has options worth about £5.6m at last night's price of 170p.

Separately, Martin Edwards,

chief executive of Manchester United Football Club, made £2.1m after it was disclosed yesterday that he has sold 1.27 per cent of the company.

His wife, who was among several other United investors to sell shares, made almost £950,000 after disposing of 0.57 per cent of her holding.

Mr Edwards, who on Sunday watched his team beat Chelsea to go through to the FA Cup Final, said the couple's sales were for private reasons and he refused to comment further.

He now holds 23.2 per cent of the club, which last week announced half-year profits of £15.3m.

Mr Edwards sold 785,000 shares at 270p, while his wife sold 350,726 at the same price. United's share price rose 2p to close at 294p yesterday.



Giant-size: Staff at the world's biggest bank which opened yesterday Photograph: AP

Japanese banking giant pledges to lead reform

Tokyo (Reuters) - The world's largest bank was yesterday born in Japan, and pledged to act as a stabilising force in the nation's shaky banking system and lead reform of lending practices in the industry.

Tsunao Wakai, chairman of Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, said his bank would use its position to help ensure that the excesses of Japan's late Eighties "bubble economy", which saddled banks with huge debts from over-aggressive property lending, were not repeated.

"The banking industry must change its behaviour, such as lending heavily to a single sector or doing things just because other members of the industry have done them," Mr Wakai said.

He added: "We must establish procedures that will prevent

a recurrence of what happened in the bubble economy."

The merger of Mitsubishi Bank and Bank of Tokyo, formally completed on Monday, created the world's biggest bank in terms of its assets, which total \$77,500bn (£47.4bn).

Industry analysts said the merger could put additional pressure on other Japanese banks to seek marriages as deregulation and bad debt problems threaten a shake-out.

The merger also coincided with two other big mergers in the US. Chase Manhattan Corp merged on Sunday with Chemical Bank Corp to create the largest US bank, with assets of \$305bn (£200bn), and yesterday saw San Francisco-based Wells Fargo and Co team up with First Interstate Bancorp.

Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi, which combines Mitsubishi's powerful domestic network and Bank of Tokyo's strong international operations, will tower over most domestic rivals in size and quality, analysts said.

Before the merger, Mitsubishi and Bank of Tokyo were separately rated single A plus.

The new bank said it would start operations with about 21,000 employees, 366 domestic branches including headquarters and other outlets, and 83 overseas branches and representative offices.

Cutting staff and redundant operations is expected to be one key to boosting the bank's profitability and deriving benefits from the merger.

Last month, bank officials said they would consider cutting some 2,000 jobs over three years.

IN BRIEF

• Aetna Life & Casualty of the US announced plans to pay \$8.9bn in cash and shares for US Healthcare to create the largest managed healthcare provider in the country. The combined group will have 10.3 million managed-care members, compared with 9.5 million for United HealthCare, which will move into second place. The new company will provide some type of health care to about one in 12 Americans. As well as health, the activities of the new business will provide life and disability insurance. Last November, Aetna announced the sale of its property and casualty business to Travelers Group for \$4bn.

• The Gas Consumers Council called for tough regulatory controls on "doorstep marketing techniques" following fresh complaints from customers in the south west, where competition begins later this month. The GCC said the latest allegations are of bad practice by CalorTex in marketing gas contracts to customers. The company, which the GCC said has now acted to resolve any problem, is alleged to have badged its salespeople as independent advisors recommending CalorTex as a best buy.

• Rhone-Poulenc Rorer has sold Fisons' scientific instruments business for \$272m. Thermo Instruments Systems of the US is buying the largest part of the division, with the rest sold to a financial group affiliated to Schroder Ventures. The consideration comprises cash of \$236m and debt of \$35.9m. The French RPR took over Fisons, a British pharmaceuticals group, last year.

• Mitsubishi Electric plans to enlarge its UK workforce by 400 over the next five years, with new jobs at its computer assembly plant in Glenrothes, Scotland, and at its Birmingham research centre. The number of jobs at Glenrothes, which produces Apricot personal computers, will double to 600.

• ICI has sold its half share in Teesside Gas Transportation to its joint venture partner, Enron Europe. Price was not disclosed, but ICI said it had made a small gain on the transaction.

Current Savings Rates.

From close of business on 1st April 1996 the following rates of interest are applicable to the accounts set out below:

	RATE PER ANNUM GROSS % NET%	
<u>60 Day Notice Account** - Paid Annually</u>		
£50,000+	5.00	4.00
£25,000-49,999	4.75	3.80
£10,000-24,999	4.25	3.40
£5,000-9,999	3.50	2.80
£500-4,999	3.15	2.52
£1-499	0.50	0.40
<u>60 Day Notice Account** - Paid Monthly</u>		
£50,000+	4.00	3.20
£25,000-49,999	3.75	3.00
£10,000-24,999	3.25	2.60
£5,000-9,999	2.50	2.00
£500-4,999	2.15	1.72
£1-499	0.50	0.40
<u>Flexible Savings Account</u>		
£50,000+	4.00	3.20
£25,000-49,999	3.75	3.00
£10,000-24,999	3.25	2.60
£5,000-9,999	2.75	2.20
£2,000-4,999	2.65	2.12
£1,000-1,999	2.55	2.04
£500-999	2.45	1.96
£1-499	0.50	0.40
<u>Interest Cheque Account</u>		
£10,000+	1.75	1.40
£5,000-9,999	0.50	0.40
£1-4,999	0.25	0.20

TSB We want you to say YES

All rates are variable. Interest paid annually unless otherwise stated. *Gross rate does not take account of the deduction of income tax at the Lower Rate of 20%. Interest payable before 8th April 1996 will be subject to income tax at 25%.

**Sixty days notice of withdrawal required or equivalent loss of interest on amount withdrawn, unless the remaining balance is £5,000.00 or more.

TSB Bank plc, Victoria House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BZ.

Strong dollar helps Nikkei to a four-year high

Share prices in Tokyo yesterday ended at a four-year high and analysts predicted that the bull run, which has seen the Nikkei 225 surge by 30 per cent since last summer, will continue for the next three months at least.

The Nikkei 225 index closed up 153.54 at 21,560.39, helped by the continuing strengthening of the dollar and in anticipation of a fresh wave of investment in the market.

Brokers believe the Nikkei is headed steadily towards 23,000, a level last seen in 1991. Share prices are being

buoyed by a steady improvement in the economy. The corporate earnings outlook is also positive. The Nikkei 225 rose 7.7 per cent alone in the first quarter of this year, and by 32.6 per cent in the financial year which ended on 31 March.

Analysts said earnings forecasts, due in May, would play a key role in deciding the stance of investors towards the market. "Investors will buy on year to March 1997 earnings forecasts," said Tim Hayashida, strategist at Merrill Lynch, which has a "bullish view" on corporate re-

sults. He added that positive earnings prospects should help the Nikkei 225 rally in the second quarter, and head towards the 24,000 point level by the third quarter.

Corporate results for the year just ended were not expected to cause a sell-off of stocks, with investors having already discounted much of the "likely damage to profits from bad debt write-offs" in the bank and related sectors.

The steady recovery in the economy should also lift the market, analysts said. "We are

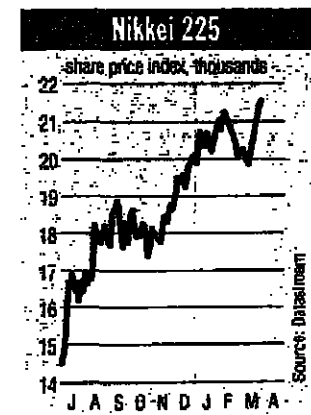
expecting positive indicators on the macro-economy in the first half of the year (to March 1997), in part on a rebound from last year when the strong yen adversely affected the economy," said Satoru Ishihara, manager of investment information at Yamaichi Securities.

Public works spending is likely to play a key role in the recovery in the six months to September, Mr Hayashida said. "The economy itself is on a recovery track although [progress is] slow, and interest rates are unlikely to rise sharply, with 3.5

per cent remaining the maximum for the long-term bond yield in calendar 1996."

Another positive trading incentive may come from the yen continuing to ease against the dollar in foreign exchange trading. Analysts said the trend in the foreign exchange would probably remain positive for the stock market and trigger renewed buying interest in high-technology issues.

The easing of the yen against the dollar should mean optimism for earnings of export-dependent electricals.



business

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

Burmah looks East for markets with promise

Burmah can't quite believe how lucky it was to get out of petrol retailing in the middle of last year, just before the blood started splashing on the forecourts. Persuading James Frost to hand over £83m for a business on the brink of a ruinous price war was a triumph of timing.

The withdrawal from fuels, now more or less completed by recent deals in Turkey and Sweden, was a useful piece of good news in what was something of a curate's egg of a set of results. The Castrol juggernaut continues its relentless progress and the ill-fated 1990 acquisition of chemicals business Fosco finally seems to be coming right, but elsewhere there are worrying signs of slowdown in the mature economies of the West.

The good news, however, outweighed the nagging doubts and, as a result, profits for 1995 emerged yesterday higher than expected at £253m, up 15 per cent. The share price, which has enjoyed a good run so far this year, nudged 10p higher to 1.067p. At that level it has more than doubled since the beginning of 1992.

The Castrol success story continues, with volumes rising 5 per cent around the world despite total market growth of only about 1 per cent. Profits grew even faster, by 13 per cent to just over £200m as existing customers were persuaded to trade up to higher-margin synthetic oils.

The real attraction of Castrol is its strong toe-hold in the developing markets of the Far East, where volumes increased by an impressive 20 per cent during the year, compared with flat sales in Europe and even a slight decline in the US. With estimates of GNP growth in the mature G7 economies now little more than a pedestrian 2 per cent, the Asia story takes on an even greater urgency.

Chemicals profits continued the impressive recovery from the recession, the length and intensity of which caught everyone, Burmah included, napping. Profits of £62.4m were 28 per cent better than in 1994 and stripping out reorganisation costs taken against the profit and loss account, the underlying return on sales is now 9 per cent, within a whisker of the targeted 10 per cent margin.

Burmah is a good long-term investment for anyone who takes the view that the economic future lies in Asia. If the growing

middle classes of India and China take to the motor car with anything like the alacrity of their Western counterparts, this is a growth story with years still to run.

In the short run, however, the shares appear to have caught up with the good news. On the basis of pre-tax profits of £145m this year, the shares stand on a prospective p/e ratio of 15. At a premium to the market, they are now high enough.

L&M plays to its strengths

The insurance industry has been up against it recently, so it was no surprise that London & Manchester's superficially impressive 5.3 per cent increase in distributable profits from £33.6m to £35.7m, relied heavily on investment income and other non-trading factors.

The underlying picture, showing a drop in new life annual premium income of 37 per cent, and a slide in single premiums of 57 per cent is more meaningful, if worrying.

The outlook is pretty gloomy on the pensions side, too - new single premium business reduced by 25 per cent to £32.7m even if existing savers are putting more into their plans than before.

Despite the gloomy numbers for new premium income, L&M remains fairly optimistic. The company has slashed its fixed operating costs by 24 per cent, part of a reorganisation that has seen it lose a fifth of head office staff in the past year and the fall in income, which has continued in the first months of this year, will be righted, the company claims, once its 700-strong sales team is reshaped into 18 new business centres.

L&M has signalled its intention to stick to its core business areas, and last year sold its residential mortgage company, netting a £7.3m profit into the bargain. The previous year, the company disposed of its consumer finance and commercial property services operations.

True, its loss-making estate agency chain - which dropped another £2.6m last year - will not go.

But if predictions of a recovery in the

housing market prove to be correct, this may turn out to be a wise move. In any event, the company's 78 branches contributed 13 per cent of its premium income so it can justify its existence through cross-selling alone.

By playing to its strengths in its bottom-end socio-economic niche, L&M claims not only to be a viable player but even to be on the look-out for potential acquisition targets with a distribution strategy similar to its own.

With a market capitalisation of only £500m, that may be wishful thinking but the shares could be buoyed by the prospect of corporate activity the other way round. Even if takeover speculation proves unfounded, a dividend of 18.7p, up 9 per cent, means L&M is yielding a reasonably attractive 5.6 per cent. That will underpin the shares.

Ulster TV bid looks a long shot

Tiny Ulster TV has, probably undeservedly, ridden the takeover rumour wave in the ITV sector with gusto, rising from 900p a share last November, when the Government promised further deregulation of the commercial TV sector, to nearly 1,400p last night.

In fact, the company, with revenues of just £34.2m, is an unlikely candidate for a bid. It controls the ITV licence for Northern Ireland, and as such does not have any of the existing ITV regions, where logic might dictate some consolidation.

True, there is a chance that a "Celtic alliance" involving Scottish TV, Ulster and HTV could still emerge once the ownership limits are lifted later this year, but the chances must be considered slim.

Sensibly, the company has decided to give some of its cash pile back to shareholders in the form of a special dividend of £1 a share, or £10m, unveiled yesterday. That sent the shares up 85p to close at 1380p.

The extra cash became available once Ulster decided against bidding for a northern Irish cable licence, in league with UK cable giant Telewest. The company has kept back some money to help finance its 43 per cent shareholding in TV3, the proposed new channel for Ireland, and to pay for its share of ITV's commitment to digital terrestrial television.

Repaying shareholders is no doubt a good thing. All the same, one wonders whether there might have been better uses for the cash. The company's core business, its ITV broadcasting activities, are likely to encounter sluggish growth of 3 per cent this year. TV3 is still a year and half away, and won't be profitable straight away.

As well, there is still doubt about the future of funding arrangements in the ITV sector, where small regional players such as Ulster are currently subsidised by the well-capitalised giants. That could change down the road.

Ulster is likely to report lower pre-tax profits this year of perhaps £7.8m, next to £8.2m this year, putting it on a pricey 27 times currently earnings. Expensive if no takeover bid is in prospect.

English cricket awaits Tesco man

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

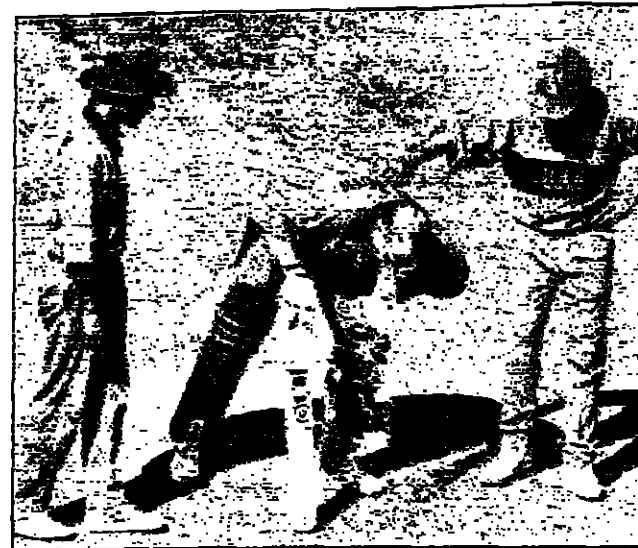
The long nightmare of English cricket may be turning into a bright new dawn if Sir Ian MacLaurin, chairman of Tesco, has anything to do with it. Sir Ian is due to retire from the helm in June next year when he reaches 60, and being a fit, permanently tanned chap it is unsurprising that he is already mapping out new things to do. While he has had "loads of approaches" from other businesses, he wants to apply his experience to the world of politics and the world of cricket. As far as politics is concerned, Sir Ian, who joined Tesco as a management trainee in 1959, has no ambition to become an MP. He would like however to apply his considerable skills to raising money for the Conservative Party. His other great ambition is to revive England's national game. He is already a member of the MMC and the Lords Taverners. So move over Illingworth, MacLaurin's coming.

Good to see that Great British traditions of service are being maintained at Next. Its High Holborn

branch in central London has a sign for opening times over the Easter period which says: "Good Friday - closed. Easter Sunday - closed. Easter Monday - closed. We look forward to seeing you." Not at Easter, obviously.

How fitting that the horse drawn in the office sweepstake for the Grand National by Mike Grant, treasurer of Eurotunnel, was called "Into the Red". The horse, rated three-to-one, did manage to finish, but not in the money. Rather like Eurotunnel.

Mick Hucknall, the carrot-haired lead singer of megapopular Simply Red, has placed an order for the new MGF 1.8i VVC, a nifty new convertible sports car from Rover which harks back to the classic British MG. The car company made most of the fact yesterday, sending us a pic of the star with the car. The accompanying blurb reads: "The portfolio of songs produced by Simply Red identify a spirit similar to those of the MGF: Fairground, Remembering the First Time, Stars... etc." No



Ailing at the crease: Neil Smith during a World Cup low point

mention of the car's price though, which suggests another group's hint: "Money's Too Tight to Mention."

Cable & Wireless middle managers can breathe a sigh of relief. Despite all the hubbalo about the talks with BT, the managers' two weeks jamboree, sorry, training programme, in the charming surrounds of Fontainebleau will go ahead after Easter as planned. C&W also confirmed yesterday that Mercury's twice yearly management knees-up in Birmingham today and tomorrow

is similarly unaffected. BT-style cost-cutting is still some way off, thank goodness.

Jonathan Fry, chief executive of Burmah Castrol, delighted a mixed group of journalists yesterday when talking about a joint venture in Turkey: "This is a good thing, as Turkey seems to be getting its act together - and will do even more so when it gets a man for a prime minister." This statement was met with a stunned silence. Mr Fry added: "You'd better strike that from the record." Too late.

ML marketing deal abandoned

MAGNUS GRIMOND

ML Laboratories, one of the UK's fledgling biotech companies, has failed to reach a crucial marketing deal for its local kidney dialysis treatment. The German healthcare group Fresenius, currently in the midst of a US acquisition which will make it the largest player in the peritoneal dialysis market, announced yesterday that it was ending its existing tie-up with ML after it had been unable to agree terms on a master agreement by the 31 March deadline. Two other healthcare firms are already thought to have attempted to find a partner to reach the treatment. The market leaders in peritoneal dialysis, US giant Baxter International and Gambro of Sweden, are already thought to have turned it down. In the case of Gambro, it is thought ML was asking for better terms than the Swedish company was able to offer.

Icodial, which is already being used in the UK, could potentially take half the market for dialysis, currently worth around £800m a year. But it has been eclipsed by recent news that Medeva has reached deals with Medeva for its dry powder inhaler device and with Glaxo Wellcome for slow release drug delivery technology.

But ML yesterday played down the impact of the failure of the initial talks. In a statement, the group said ML and Fresenius "are well advanced in discussions regarding alternative forms of collaboration and are seeking to reach an agreement relating to the peritoneal dialysis market in both Europe and the USA within the next few months with a view to launching Icodial in Europe later this year". A spokesman emphasised that talks were continuing.

The latest blow to hopes of reaching a deal on Icodial follows several years in which ML is said to have attempted to find a partner to reach the treatment. The market leaders in peritoneal dialysis, US giant Baxter International and Gambro of Sweden, are already thought to have turned it down. In the case of Gambro, it is thought ML was asking for better terms than the Swedish company was able to offer.

Icodial, which is already being used in the UK, could potentially take half the market for dialysis, currently worth around £800m a year. But it has been eclipsed by recent news that Medeva has reached deals with Medeva for its dry powder inhaler device and with Glaxo Wellcome for slow release drug delivery technology.

IN BRIEF

• Macallan-Glenlivet is recommending a 15 per cent dividend increase for the year to December to reflect its confidence that 1996 will show advances in all areas of its whisky business. Profits in the year increased 6 per cent to £7.01m despite a fall in sales of new whisky to other blenders and the cost of changing a distributor in an unnamed overseas market. Earnings per share of 4.87p (4.12p) allowed a total dividend for the year of 1.46p.

• Dealings in Orange shares held by private investors starts today a week after trading started for institutions. Small investor dealings were delayed after the offer was scaled back to allow shareholders to be notified of the size of their holdings. Orange, placed at 205p, raced to an immediate premium last week and closed yesterday at 225.5p.

• Lord Roes-Mogg, the IBC chairman, said 1995 was another excellent year for supplier of business information. While it was too early to forecast this year's performance, he said 1996 had started well. After a 24 per cent rise in turnover to £97m, operating profits were 19 per cent better at £12.8m. The dividend jumped 23 per cent to 8p for the year, up from 6.5p.

• Capita said its managed services operation had won a seven-year, £72m contract to administer the teachers' superannuation scheme in England and Wales. The TSS is a statutory, unfunded pension scheme administered by an agency of the Department for Employment and Education.

• Outdoor advertising group Maiden is to float on the stock market "in the near future", the company said yesterday. The group, where profits have risen 77 per cent since a 1993 management buyout, should be valued at about £65m.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
African Lakes (F)	38.5m (46.7m)	-1.9m (0.94m)	-34.78p (5.14p)	nil (0.5p)
Burmah Castrol (F)	3,065m (2,930m)	253m (244m)	66.9p (68.4p)	36.25p (30p)
Freemove Estates (F)	62.2m (63.2m)	6.81m (7.2m)	7.1p (10.4p)	4.1p (4p)
IBC Group (F)	97.0m (77.6m)	12.4m (10.1m)	25.5p (20.4p)	8p (6.5p)
London & Manchester (F)	- (-)	57.11m (-14.0m)	36.8p (-3.3p)	18.7p (17.15p)
Pharmacia (F)	12.1m (7.34m)	-20.3m (1.04m)	-35.41p (1.82p)	nil (-)
Shorrock & Fisher (F)	63.5m (64.4m)	3.83m (4.4m)	12.2p (14p)	5.2p (5p)
Ulster TV (F)	34.2m (31.4m)	8.2m (7.45m)	51.77p (48.16p)	22.5p (20p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (T) - 12 months, comparatives 14 months

This week in THE INDEPENDENT

This week and every week, Section Two has a completely new look, with more pages, new features, a daily radio column and an expanded listings section providing Britain's most comprehensive daily guide to going out.

in Today

Tony Blair and Bill Clinton: are they destined for a special relationship? Global warming and you: man made perils that will affect us all. The new Family Life section looks into how to backpack without tears. Do we need... Dennis the Menace: Jim White conducts a personal investigation into whether there is a place in the modern world for the classical naughty boy. Julie Myerson meanwhile takes her naughty boy to the

on Tuesday

Part three of The Scorched Earth: how do we slow down the global warming process? Plus: Health - the mother of a brain-injured teenager

on Wednesday

Theatre: "Jekyll: the musical" opened in Bromley last week. What are the chances of a West End transfer. We talk to the backers and review the show. Plus: midweek travel section, your money, finance and law.

on Thursday

All our regular features, including Dilemmas, John Walsh's column, plus film, education and graduate

on Friday

24Seven - a new 20-page pull-out-and-keep entertainment and listings section, including a complete day-by-day planner for the week ahead, plus

hairdressers. Plus Network: the complete PC guide.

and in Sport

A 24-page section with all the action from a big weekend of sport. Plus: The Monday interview: Vicente Modahl on masterminding Diane's redemption. The Grand National: the agony of the waiting game. And it's an all-red FA Cup Final, Liverpool vs Manchester United, dream or nightmare?

is convinced she has found a treatment to help her son. Also on Tuesday, fashion, architecture, visual arts and media.

In our back pages, Martin Newell, Britain's leading rock poet, and Neil Kerber, one of the country's funniest cartoonists, present their views of the modern world.

plus. In the back pages, William Hartston's history of the world in 104 1/2 inches



International trade: Britain throws weight behind world-wide revolt by America's trading partners against legislation aimed at ousting Castro

Blockade of Cuban sugar triggers company rethink

PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

British companies are urgently reviewing their business activities in Cuba, and stepping up lobbying against the blockade imposed by America.

ED & F Man, the big sugar trader, said the embargo was already causing problems, obliging it to consider what can be done with our involvement in Cuba.

BAT, which a year ago opened the first joint venture with a state-owned cigarette manufacturer in Cuba, said it was exercising all potential for lobbying and monitoring the underlying political circumstances.

Through Foreign Office pressure, as well as lobbyists and lawyers in Washington, Britain is throwing its weight into a full-scale international revolt, involving mainly Canada, Mexico and the European Union, against a new law aimed at squeezing Cuban leader Fidel Castro from power.

The so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, also known as the Helms-Burton

bill, is complex and ambiguous and there is widespread uncertainty about exactly what it will mean for those doing business in Cuba or considering investment.

But alarm at implications that appear to be potentially devastating, and anger at what is seen to have been a flouting of principles, pushed Washington's big trading allies to align themselves with Cuba and attack the law as a violation of world trade rules at the latest Geneva session of the Council on Trade in Goods of the World Trade Organisation.

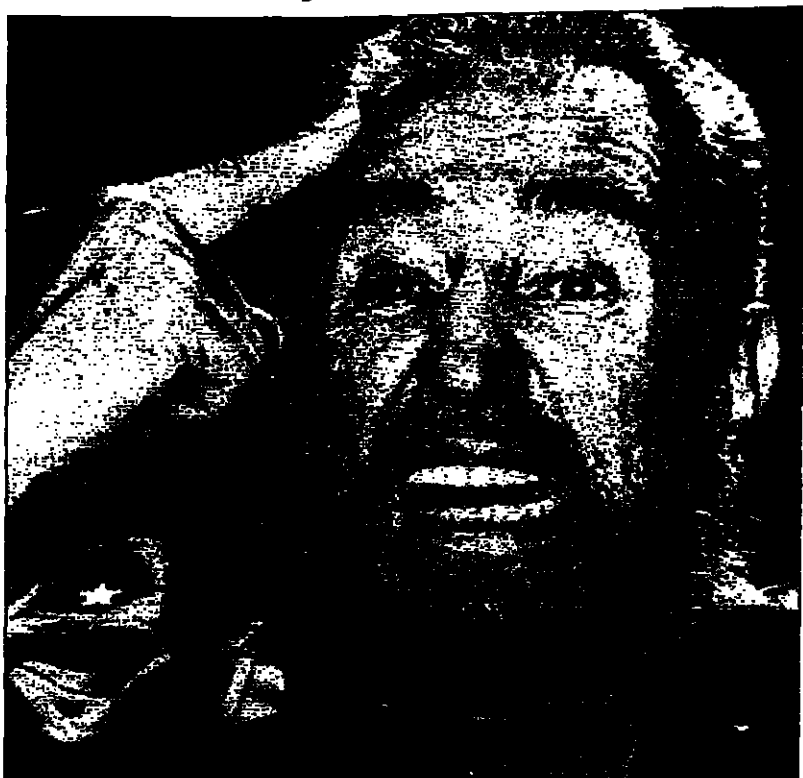
Mr Clinton himself had vehemently opposed the law, sponsored by strongly anti-Castro Republican congressmen Jesse Helms and Dan Burton, until Cuban Mig fighter planes shot down two civilian light aircraft flown by Cuban Americans over the Florida Straits last month. Undoubtedly by one eye, or both, on the key Florida vote in November's presidential election, he changed tack, signed the bill and said he hoped a squeeze on foreign investors would finally bring Mr Castro down.

That brought him the hoped-for acclaim from Florida's hundreds of thousands of influential Cuban exiles but, in reality, numerous ambiguities, loopholes and provisos added by White House aides mean the new law may have little real effect.

Essentially, the law discourages foreign investors in Cuba by facing them with the possibility of law suits from Cuban exiles. Cuban Americans can sue in US courts for compensation for property or land confiscated after Mr Castro's 1959 revolution and later bought by foreign companies.

Miami lawyers estimate claims could reach a total of about \$100bn (£65.5bn). It would also bar executives or controlling shareholders of foreign companies involved in any such confiscated Cuban property from entering the US.

That is the theoretical bad news for the 225 companies from 50 countries involved in joint ventures with Mr Castro's communist regime, among them 15 or so British firms, as well as potential investors such as Tate and Lyle.



Battlegrounds drawn: Fidel Castro (left) has won international support against Bill Clinton's campaign to force Cuban sugar off world markets

Theoretical, because the good news may not only outweigh but erase the bad. For one thing, the law refers to "after the enactment of this act," apparently exempting existing investors. Secondly, Cuban Americans will be able to sue only foreign companies that have subsidiaries or holdings in the US. That rules out many, if not most of them. Thirdly, in reality few foreign companies are thought to own Cuban property. In most joint ventures, the foreign companies use factories, land or property owned by the Cuban state, such

as all 175 sugar mills. (Although Cuban exiles may dispute that ownership, it would not legally affect the foreign investor.)

As if all that were not enough to calm the nerves of potential investors, Mr Clinton insisted on a clause saying the President can veto all law suits for periods of six months at a time if he considers such a move "in the national interest".

That gives Mr Clinton plenty of leeway if he wins in November. If the Republican contender is victorious, the veto is more likely to be ignored.

In terms of loopholes, the law is a veritable Emmentaler cheese and is already being dubbed by hand-wringing Miami lawyers as the Full Employment for Lawyers act.

On Capitol Hill, it has also been dubbed the Bacardi act and that brings us to yet another proviso which will be welcomed by foreign investors and reveals much as to the law's true aims and origins.

Only those Cubans whose land, property or business was worth more than \$50,000 dollars when confiscated (mostly in the

years following 1959) have the right to sue.

That was a lot of pesos at the time and rules out the vast majority of Cuban exiles, mostly farmers or small businessmen.

It also weighs the bill heavily in favour of giant enterprises such as the Bacardi rum company, now Bermuda-based with a subsidiary in the US, and families such as the Fanjul, who once had vast sugar holdings in Cuba.

The Bacardi family estimates its distillery, breweries and real estate in Cuba were worth \$76m

when confiscated by Mr Castro in 1960. Wealthy enough to have already had US citizenship by then, they will no doubt be suing pronto.

As it happens, Bacardi co-hosted a Miami fund-raiser for the bill's co-sponsor, Senator Helms, last year and a Bacardi lawyer at first claimed to have helped draft the legislation before later opting for a more discreet silence.

And speaking of Bacardi, with so many leaks, the "Liberty act" may be on the rocks before Mr Castro.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark
US	1.5854	8-6	22-9	0.6742
Canada	2.0670	11-3	30-37	0.6968
Germany	2.2522	55-41	147-22	1.0000
France	6.5510	100-18	371-340	504.08
Italy	2.2623	75-90	221-46	167-82
Japan	164.01	75-10	225-28	107.53
ECU	1.291	5-11	45-40	0.5389
Belgium	24.634	12-9	34-29	204.01
Denmark	6.782	38-9	107-107	173-104
Netherlands	25.33	63-54	189-175	155-95
Ireland	0.0696	9-5	25-20	157-29
Norway	9.8287	18-24	525-233	644-36
Spain	160.7	35-48	107-134	24-67
Sweden	13.01	9-15	25-34	65-64
Switzerland	2.2028	60-40	187-185	113-105
Australia	1.9401	20-31	67-85	127-18
Hong Kong	11.736	101-81	234-170	2-12
Malaysia	3.8807	0-0	0	23-30
New Zealand	2.2228	43-57	133-156	30-32
Saudi Arabia	5.7206	0-0	0	37-50
Singapore	2.4368	0-0	0	140-67

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	15252	0.0957
Australia	1.5307	0.6742
Belgium	2.2522	0.6968
Canada	12.760	0.6968
Egypt	5.4265	34.404
Finland	7.073	0.4822
Greece	369.006	24.730
India	51.5262	34.050
Kuwait	0.4573	0.2957

Forward rates quoted low to high are as a discount; subject from spot rate add to spot rate.
 *Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.
 For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0801 123 3333.
 Calls cost 36p per minute (cheap rates) 48p other times.

Interest Rates

UK	600%	Germany	300%	US	8.75%	Japan	5.0%
Base	10.00	Discount	5.00%	Discount	5.00%	Discount	5.00%
Intervention	3.00%	Prime	7.00%	Prime	7.00%	Prime	7.00%
Discount	9.00%	Discount	5.00%	10-Day Repo	8.00%	Switzerland	1.50%
Advances	3.00%	Discount	3.75%	Repo (Fwd)	7.00%	Lombard	4.25%

Bond Yields

Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr	Country	5yr	10yr	15yr	20yr
UK	8.00%	7.44	8.1%	8.0%	Netherlands	5%	5.05	5%	5.37
US	5.7%	6.0%	5.9%	6.1%	Spain	10.5%	10.5%	10.5%	10.5%
Japan	6.4%	6.2%	6.1%	6.0%	Sweden	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%	7.5%
Australia	8.1%	8.4%	8.7%	8.7%	Belgium	5%	5.1%	5.1%	5.1%
Germany	5.1%	5.4%	5.6%	5.6%	Switzerland	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%
France	5.6%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	ECU (Fwd)	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%	9.1%

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	1 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	6 1/4	6 1/4
Local Authority Depos	6	6	6	6	6
Discount Market Rates	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Treasury Bill (91)	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
Dollar Cds	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4
ECU Liquid Dep	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4	5 1/4

Tourist Rates

£ Buys	£ Buys	£ Buys
Australia (Dollars)	1.8850	74300
Australia (Schilling)	1.2500	60000
Belgium (Francs)	45.0000	332.0000
Canada (Dollars)	2.0000	115.0000
Cyprus (Pounds)	0.0850	0.0850
Denmark (Krone)	5.4600	20.0000
Holland (Guilder)	2.4675	12.0000
Finland (Markka)	7.0000	0.5400

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement price	High/Low for day	Est. Cont'd	Open Interest
Long Gilt (Jun 98)	105.09	105.10	104.25	32229
German Bond (Jun 98)	95.57	95.67	95.34	51405
US Bond (Jun 98)	108.01	108.07	107.72	218590
Italian Bond (Jun 98)	105.55	105.75	105.33	29144
3M Sterling (Jun 98)	93.84	93.95	93.93	5556
3M Eurodollar (Jun 98)	93.77	93.77	93.77	5053
3M Eurodollar (Sep 98)	93.79	93.79	93.77	22503
ECU (Jun 98)	95.48	95.48	95.48	608
FTSE 100 (Jun 98)	3730.0	3730.0	3730.0	814
FTSE 250 (Jun 98)	3730.0	3730.0	3730.0	814
EURO (Jun 98)	93.39	93.39	93.37	83.4

Life FT-SE Index Option

Series	Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price	Settlement price
Series	3550	3700	3750	3800
Call/Put	Call	Call	Call	Call
Strike	88.15	91.27	94.51	97.87
Price	103.94	70.92	51.75	31.70
Volume	103.94	70.92	51.75	31.70
Open	103.94	70.92	51.75	31.70

Energy

Brent Crude	WTI	Gas	Oil	WTI
Brent Crude	WTI	Gas	Oil	WTI
WTI	WTI	Gas	Oil	WTI
WTI	WTI	Gas	Oil	WTI
WTI	WTI	Gas	Oil	WTI

Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change
Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change
Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change
Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change
Index	Value	Change	Index	Value	Change

Industrial Metals

Aluminum HG	Aluminum Alloy	Copper A	Lead	Nickel	Tin	Zinc
Aluminum HG	Aluminum Alloy	Copper A	Lead	Nickel	Tin	Zinc
Aluminum HG	Aluminum Alloy	Copper A	Lead	Nickel	Tin	Zinc
Aluminum HG	Aluminum Alloy	Copper A	Lead	Nickel	Tin	Zinc
Aluminum HG	Aluminum Alloy	Copper A	Lead	Nickel	Tin	Zinc

Precious Metals

Platinum	Palladium	Gold	Silver	Copper	Aluminum	Steel
Platinum	Palladium	Gold	Silver	Copper	Aluminum	Steel
Platinum	Palladium	Gold	Silver	Copper	Aluminum	Steel
Platinum	Palladium	Gold	Silver	Copper	Aluminum	Steel
Platinum	Palladium	Gold	Silver	Copper	Aluminum	Steel

Agricultural

Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Wheat	Maize	Soybeans
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Wheat	Maize	Soybeans
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Wheat	Maize	Soybeans
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Wheat	Maize	Soybeans
Cocoa	Coffee	Barley	Potatoes	Wheat	Maize	Soybeans

Other Softs

Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld	Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		
AIM Equity & Low Unit Trust Managers																		

sport

Judging the pace when you can't see where you are going is difficult
— you are torn between taking it too easy and maintaining a lead

I had a perfect score in Brazil on Sunday: pole position, led from the start, won the race and set the fastest lap. My second win in succession was rather different to Australia three weeks before, when I only took the lead with a few laps to go. That was one reason why I wanted to dominate at Interlagos.

It couldn't have been better. I got the best out of the equipment last weekend and the Rothmans Williams Renault team did a brilliant job. Everything came together beautifully. What's more, the race was run in very tricky conditions; we had to contend with as many variables as you could possibly imagine.

About half an hour before the start, the weather let rip as only it can in South America. As we made our way round the circuit to the starting grid, I remember noticing that

water was pumping backwards through the drains. On the inside of turn 10, there was literally a fountain of water about two feet high as the drainage system tried, unsuccessfully, to cope with the deluge. There were crashes of thunder and lightning: very, very treacherous conditions in which to start a race.

If you have to race under those circumstances, it's almost a no-win situation. If you don't keep your foot down there is the risk that someone unsighted by the spray could crash into the back of you. By the same token, if you keep your foot on it and there's too much standing water, you could easily aquaplane off the track. To judge the pace when you can't see where you are going is extremely difficult. Choosing whether or not to start the race on Sunday must have been a close

call but, fortunately, everything went off without incident.

My team-mate, Jacques Villeneuve, gave a very impressive performance in his second grand prix race by taking second place off the line after starting third on the grid. He fought hard to maintain second, with Jean Alesi hard on his heels, but unfortunately Jacques spun off on lap 27 and landed in a gravel trap.

There had been some fairly rapid decision-making just before the start. We reckoned it was going to rain for at least the first 10 laps and, more than likely, the track would not dry out for at least another 10 laps. That would take us towards half distance (35 laps), so it seemed sensible to go for just one pit stop. It turned out to be a good call by the team although, for a while, it was touch and go.



DAMON HILL

Around lap 20, I thought the track was going to dry out. I got on the radio and said it would be time for slick tyres in a couple of laps — but then it rained again. The trouble was, it was raining on one half of the circuit but not on the other. The start/finish area and the first couple of corners were bone dry and yet, on the back of the circuit, it was ac-

tually raining very hard. The weather report had said there would be local showers, but this was unbelievably local; dramatically different conditions within a quarter of a mile — and it carried on like that for a good third of the race. It was very difficult to decide when to come in for slicks and the limiting factor was going to be the need to take on more fuel. Fortunately, conditions started to turn at the point when I needed to make my pit stop. In fact, the timing was spot on.

When I returned to the track with slicks, my lap times started to come down even though the circuit was still soaking wet in some places. It was one of those tricky situations where the temptation is to be extra careful; you are torn between taking it too easy and maintaining a healthy lead. Alesi was in

second place and he was the sort of driver who would really start eating into my lead if he got the bit between his teeth. But I remembered that, after crashing out of the Australian Grand Prix, Alesi had said he wanted to finish this race, so his usual exuberance was probably curbed by that thought.

I managed to extend the gap to a healthy margin but I must admit to feeling a little nervous when Rubens Barrichello spun off in front of me.

That incident underlined the fact that the race isn't over until you see the chequered flag. Last year, I had this race in the bag until I was robbed by a suspension failure. Experience in Formula One teaches you that there are many things which are in the lap of the gods and outside your control. With a 20-second lead, you

can do your best to concentrate, maintain the gap and ensure you don't make any silly mistakes — but then little things can deprive you of victory. You just pray that everything runs smoothly. On Sunday, it was perfect.

In fact, the whole weekend had been perfect. I felt good about my driving; I felt very happy in the car and enjoyed every lap. And, when it was over, I was presented with my trophy by one of the world's greatest sportsmen. I don't know much about football but I know enough to appreciate Pelé's achievements and his standing in the game. To receive the trophy from the great Brazilian was an honour and it's little touches like that which are as memorable as achieving a perfect score.

©Damon Hill Grand Prix Ltd 1996

Ivanisevic armed and dangerous

John Roberts talks to the big-serving Croat who has added a new dimension to his game — one which he hopes will take him to the Wimbledon singles title

Pity about the pain in the neck, but things do tend to go awry for Goran Ivanisevic at important moments in his career. Sometimes he is deserted by his mighty serve. Frequently his temperament lets him down. Occasionally he runs out of luck, as was the case when he awoke with the crick which forced him to retire against Andre Agassi after only 10 minutes of the Lipton final in Florida on Sunday.

But for the interventions of Agassi and Pete Sampras, along with an inability to hold his concentration, the 24-year-old Croat would have been a Wimbledon champion by now. That remains his chief ambition, and a distinct possibility judging his fresh approach to the game of late.

Ivanisevic has advanced to seven ATP Tour finals in nine tournaments this year, winning titles in Zagreb, Dubai, Milan and Rotterdam and producing a greater variety in his play than 630 aces would indicate.

His form is brighter (his one success last year was at the Grand Slam Cup in Munich in December) and his mood seems lighter. For example, Ivanisevic and his coach, Vedran Martić, spent most of the 48-minute rain delay which came to his rescue during the semi-final against Pete Sampras reminiscing about old times at the tennis club in Split.

"We were talking about how the kids are very spoiled now," Ivanisevic said. "When we were very young we had to renovate the courts. I was staying very far away from the tennis club, and I always had the job of carrying the clay and the garbage. We started to laugh like idiots thinking about that, like I am winning [against Sampras] 6-2, not losing."

Then there are the serious contests: card games in which he partners his coach against his parents. "We play an Italian game, *briscola*, and my father is pretty experienced. It is a big battle of pride, and we are losing all the time. There are all sorts of signs which you are not allowed to do in this game; a little cheating, you know. My father doesn't know that we are cheating, but it doesn't help. I don't like to lose at any kind of cards. The other

night they beat us pretty badly, and I couldn't sleep."

Martić, 29, is as much a companion as a coach. Promising as a junior, he later played mostly league tennis in Germany, where he was studying. Ivanisevic hired his boyhood friend on a year's contract a few months after losing the services of the Australian, Bob Brett, last October.

Brett, who guided Ivanisevic to Wimbledon finals in 1992 and 1994, having previously enjoyed success with Boris Becker, finally despaired, concluding that his advice was no longer heeded.

"I wanted to win matches so badly, and I couldn't produce anything good on the court," Ivanisevic recounted. "I was losing to anybody, everybody; it was just not there."

'I lost my mind a bit in Milan a couple of weeks ago but that was just for a couple of seconds'

"We came to Essen, and I lost to [Martin] Sinner and then I lost in the doubles at two in the morning, and Bob said to me: 'Eight o'clock, practice.' I said: 'I'm not going to practise, because, practise or no practise, I cannot beat anybody.' Then he said: 'We're finished.'"

"Bob had said so many times [before] that we were finished, and after half an hour I would say: 'Sorry, Bob, everything is OK.' But next morning he called me and said he wanted to talk to me, and I went to his room and he showed me a press release he had written. I was shocked. I almost got a heart attack. I knew it was over. I didn't want to beg. It was his decision, and probably he was right."

Ivanisevic contacted Martić at Christmas and invited him to join him in Australia in January. "I phoned Bob and asked him what he thought of Vedran becoming my coach. Bob gave me full support."

"For four and a half years I was part of Bob's family, and I

still have a good relationship with his kids and his wife, and we talk normally. At Indian Wells I did a little jogging at six in the morning, and I was just coming back from running and Bob was going out to run. Before, I never could imagine me running before Bob. That is something unbelievable."

Ivanisevic finds it helps that Martić speaks the same language and has known him since he was nine years old. "Everybody asks if he is my brother," Ivanisevic said. "He is my coach, my friend, everything. A lot of coaches are just there because they are paid to be there and OK, they practise with the guy and say, 'See you tomorrow.' I didn't want a coach like that. I want to be good friends, which I was with Bob and have been with Vedran for 15 years."

"What's good for me is that Vedran has put fresh things in my mind, and suddenly I clicked. I know I am probably going to have some tough times, because it is tough to go on like this. But I realise that the next couple of years could be my best years in tennis."

"I have changed my attitude. I am more calm on the court. I lost my mind a little bit in Milan a couple of weeks ago, but that was just for a couple of seconds."

There is evidence, too, that Ivanisevic is liberating shots which have lain dormant behind a serve which has set records for aces that will stand, he says, "for 200 years, until robots come along."

In particular, he is executing the forehand down the line to good effect. "It is one of the most important shots in tennis, which I used before once every five months."

Of immediate concern is Ivanisevic's fitness for a Davis Cup tie in Ukraine, which starts on Friday. After that, his thoughts will turn to the series of clay-court tournaments leading up to the French Open. And then comes Wimbledon.

Ah, yes, Wimbledon. "Wimbledon is another story," he said. "You can't compare any tournament with Wimbledon. I can win every match before Wimbledon, and Wimbledon will come and I can lose. But maybe I can reach another final and play the best match of my life."



Goran Ivanisevic: A man in form with four ATP titles so far this season Photograph: AP

A drop kick is the result of enterprise and real skill and should count for more than a penalty

Rugby is now like a merry-go-round whose speed is controlled by someone who does not quite understand the mechanism but is doing his best to keep the contraption under some kind of control. In the last year the pace has accelerated alarmingly. Some of the passengers find this exhilarating, others are fearful, others are hanging on for dear life, while others again will lose their hold and be flung into the watching crowd, as a few already have been.

Who would have thought that Jonathan Davies would come back to union, even if his return — not entirely through his own fault — has been something of a let-down? Who would have predicted that Wigan would be playing Bath twice in May 1996, once under union rules, once under league?

Though Jeremy Guscott is entitled to do exactly as he

pleases, I am sorry he has decided not to participate in these encounters. He is wrong, I think, in regarding them as a piece of showbusiness. They may force rugby to change even more rapidly than it is changing already.

I would expect Wigan to win the league match easily and Bath to win the union match narrowly. Whatever happens, questions are going to be asked about various aspects of the union game.

The first is the line-out. Do we need a line-out at all? If we do, is there not a case for legalising lifting, which happens anyway? Wigan may indeed conquer the line-out — they may try to ignore it altogether by throwing over it to the back. They may have short lines on their own throw. We shall learn something.

We shall learn something, too, about ruck and maul. It



ALAN WATKINS on rugby

may be that Wigan will show defending sides how to cope with the driving or walling maul, which I have long maintained is illegal. It seems that some people are now coming around to my point of view.

League-school values are also different. I should like to see the drop-goal rewarded in relation to the penalty. In 1954, when Derrell Thomas of Neath won the match against Ire-

land with a drop and was never picked for Wales again, a successful kick was worth the same as a try, three points. Shortly before that, it had been worth four.

I would not want to go back to that ratio which, under current values, would make a drop worth seven points. I would not even wish to make it count for as much as a try. But there is a convenient number between three and five, which is four. A drop kick is the result of enterprise and real skill, and should count for more than a penalty.

But there is a wider question. Why should place kicks exist at all? There may be a case for penalising foul or unfair play, such as deliberately killing the ball, with a free point at goal. There is another school of thought which maintains that guaranteed possession, followed by a kick,

whether tapped or to touch, is adequate recompense for the wronged side.

Now that possession is maintained at the line-out, many teams prefer to go for touch rather than for goal. Similarly, they may opt for a scrum when the offence occurs close to their opponents' line (as Harlequins did against Sale on Saturday) and there is a possibility of seven points rather than a probability of three.

And yet, why should the value of a try be increased to seven merely because of a successful kick at goal? Any justification is bound to be historical rather than rational. There is a strong case for abolishing the conversion completely.

This is unlikely to happen during my lifetime. There will almost certainly be a premium on place-kickers — despite the developments I have just men-

tioned. Therefore, it would be helpful if the papers published lists of players giving percentages of successful kicks at goal besides totals of points. It may be that John Lily of Leicester would still come out top of the first division if the former criterion were adopted in addition to the latter. It would be nice to know, all the same.

I should like to say that I am deeply attached to the scoreboard at the Richmond Athletic Ground. At the top it announces itself, in capitals, as SCOREBOARD, as if it might be mistaken by a careless observer for an inter-continental ballistic missile instead. Underneath, in much smaller letters, it specifies the teams on display. It testifies to the old amateur spirit of rugby football.

It would hardly be a siller construction. Clearly, under the new regime, it cannot be long for this world.

Presentation remains the missing link

Dave Hadfield, who watched four out of the six games in the opening round of Super League, assesses the impact of a whole new oval ball game

It would not be exaggerating the value of the opening performances of Paris St-Germain and London Broncos if their players were to be given medals before their match at Charlton on Thursday night.

Whatever else they might achieve in this and subsequent summer seasons, they got the Stones Super League away to a start that ensured that the first weekend of the new competition would go down as a success.

The fact that both sides won — and that Paris did so before a crowd of nearly 18,000 — undermined some of the prevailing prejudices against the new shape of the sport. They showed that whatever might be wrong with Super League as a concept, it is not the inclusion of London and Paris.

The atmosphere at the Stade Charley on Friday night was different from that at any game I have seen in France. The crowd was younger, more cosmopolitan, infinitely more sustained in its enthusiasm.

Agreed, more than half that crowd had got in by applying for, rather than paying for, tickets. But that is beside the point; the key was to get them there. The attendance at Halifax on the Saturday night was less encouraging, but London's victory was another unexpected bonus. Teams from the two capital cities which are capable of winning matches against opposition as competent as Sheffield Eagles and Halifax would be a genuinely new and exciting element in the game and many will be willing to continue their good work.

Unfortunately, there was too much elsewhere that was all too familiar. There were two hopelessly uncompetitive sides — Oldham and Workington Town — incapable of making Wigan and St Helens raise a sweat. Those are the sort of non-competitions that Super League is supposed to abolish. No sign of that on the first weekend.

There were mixed signals, as well, from the way in which clubs presented their games. Much emphasis has been put on the importance of pre-match entertainment, but the signs on a chilly March weekend were that nobody in the crowd cared very much about that aspect.

Even in Paris, the presence of "France's top rap band" attracted few into the stadium

early. Many came in after the start of the main match, in fact.

Oldham had a Tina Turner lookalike — an admission of the derivative nature of much of the thinking, if ever there was one — Leeds and Halifax had sky-divers who failed to dive out of the sky. Where it was dark, there were fireworks; where it was light, there were balloons.

Leeds laid on the widest range of pre-match activities, but their build-up on the pitch was also the most embarrassing. The non-arrival of the parachutists, a depleted steel band and a compere whose sole function seemed to be to get up the collective nose made it a squirm-inducing launch.

Even the balloons were reluctant to leave the ground, and when the music and the pom-pom dancers burst into activity for a try that had already been disallowed the phrase "teething problems" no longer seemed adequate. The contrast with the spectacular way in which Auckland Warriors staged their first home match a year ago was total.

Leeds were also an example of how the mood of the first weekend often depended on factors that had nothing to do with Super League or summer rugby. Their spectators are on a downer at the moment, with a dismal Challenge Cup semi-final defeat still fresh in their minds, and they were not in the mood to be jollied along.

At Odsal, on the other hand, a rare five-figure crowd was in the mood to be jollied along and a notoriously atmosphere-free ground had a different feel to it. But that was not because of the excellence or otherwise of the Muldoon Brothers' country and western. It was because Bradford are going to Wembley and suddenly seem a side worth watching. A wintry weekend was no test of the long-term viability of summer rugby. Perhaps the entertainment will stir the blood more when the weather is better.

For now, a weekend that may be remembered as the start of a bold, new future or the time when rugby league headed off down a cul-de-sac will be summed up for me by two contrasting images. At Reading, the pitch seemed to have responded to summer rugby by turning overnight into a desert. And at Odsal it snowed.

Clarke's hopes lifted

Hopes are rising that Phil Clarke will be able to play again despite breaking his neck, writes Dave Hadfield. The former Wigan and Great Britain loose forward cracked the fourth vertebra in his spinal column in three places while playing for Sydney City Roosters against North Queensland on Saturday.

It was feared that his career was over, but tests have shown that there is no permanent damage. Clarke is hoping to play again before the end of this season, but a comeback next year could be a more realistic target.

His mother and father are with him in Sydney after arriving for a holiday unaware of the injury that had befallen him during their journey.

Shaun McRae, the St Helens coach, expects to have Paul Newlove available for the Good Friday derby against Wigan. Newlove went off with a suspected broken thumb on Sunday, but passed an examination yesterday. Simon Booth, how-

ever, is out for at least three weeks with medial ligament damage, putting his Wembley place in some doubt. Derek McVey is under consideration as his replacement against Wigan.

McRae is asking the Rugby League whether four replacements will now be allowed at Wembley, in line with the other rule changes introduced for Super League which will also apply for the final. "As I understand it, all the other new rules will be in use, so I can't see why we should be limited to two substitutes," McRae said.

Wigan are to sign Chris and Phil Farrell, the 15-year-old twin brothers of their Great Britain loose forward, Andy.

Maurice Lindsay, the European Super League chief executive, hailed the attendances on the first weekend of summer rugby as a triumph. The average of more than 9,000 for the opening matches in the top division was the best since the one division system was scrapped in 1973.

SPORT

Thunder, lightning and a flooded track could not spoil a perfect weekend.
Damon Hill recounts the difficulties of racing in the rain

24

FOOTBALL: Governing body may offer more seats at lower prices as concern grows about empty spaces at FA Cup semi-finals

FA to review ticket policy but not prices

PHIL SHAW

The Football Association, stunned by the sight of thousands of empty seats at its two FA Cup semi-finals on Sunday, last night promised to review the structure and spread of the cost of tickets – but prices will not be cut.

Liverpool's victory over Aston Villa at Old Trafford was watched by 39,072 spectators, 11,000 less than capacity. At Villa Park, where Manchester United overcame Chelsea, the attendance of 38,421 meant that around a thousand tickets went unsold. Ticket prices were the same as in the past two years – £14, £22, £30 and £38, with no concessions for children – but only a small minority of seats were available at the two lower amounts. At Manchester, for example, all but 2,004 seats per club were £30 or more.

The FA's response to criticism of ticket prices for matches under its aegis was to suggest that it was not unhappy with the cost of tickets. "We have no plans to review our prices," an FA spokesman, Steve Double, said. "However, our ticket structure may need to be addressed. It seems we have too many seats in the top band and not enough cheap seats. I can understand Villa supporters staying away as they had been at Wembley the

week before. Liverpool fans obviously didn't want to pay those prices, even though all the seats at Old Trafford afford good views."

Ticket prices for games under the aegis of the FA are set by its 14-man Match and Grounds Committee, headed by the Birmingham City chairman Jack Wiseman. Ken Bates (Chelsea), Doug Hammond

The FA Match and Grounds Committee
 J Wiseman, chairman, (Birmingham City); T Annable (Nottinghamshire FA); K Bates (Chelsea); B Bright (West FA); A Barfield (Chelsea FA); R Burr (Millwall); D Hammond (Swansea); D Insole (Cambridge University); A Odell (Middlesex FA); T Powell (Herefordshire FA); P Rushton (Worcestershire FA); J Ryder (Cornwall FA); B Taylor (Barnsley); G Thompson (Sheffield & Hallamshire FA).

(Swansea), Reg Burr (Millwall) and Barry Taylor (Barnsley) are the only other club chairmen, present and past, to sit on the committee.

Popular disquiet over the FA's pricing policy surfaced at the same stage last season, when Manchester United and Crystal Palace supporters were faced with the cost of attending a replay in Birmingham three days after the original semi-final was drawn there. Only

17,987 watched the match, the lowest turn-out for a semi-final in more than half a century.

The complaints were red-nosed last week when England's Wembley friendly against Bulgaria, billed as a warm-up for the European Championship finals this summer, attracted a gate of less than 30,000.

For that fixture, ticket prices ranged from £13 up to £45. Half-price concessions for children were restricted to the 9,773-capacity family enclosure, where adult seats were £16 and £20. Situated in the bottom tier of the stand which houses the Royal Box, the family section offers a less than perfect view.

Ticket arrangements for the FA Cup final, on 11 May, were announced yesterday. The cheapest will be £17, with others at £16, £25, £30, £35, £40, £45 and £60. Places in the Olympic gallery will cost £100 and £115. Both clubs are to receive 25,500 tickets, in contrast with the Coca-Cola Cup finalists' allocation of 32,000 each.

"It's a good spread of prices to suit all fans," Double said. "We don't anticipate any empty seats at that game."

In contrast with its English counterpart, the Scottish FA is anticipating a full house of 38,000 at both its Tennents Cup semi-finals. Tickets for both games, which will be played on successive days next weekend, are priced at just £13 and £14.

Meanwhile, several clubs in the Endcliffe League are monitoring the initiative of Huddersfield Town and Blackpool in giving free season tickets to children under 11. "A lot of clubs are watching closely to see how it works," the League spokesman, Chris Hull, said yesterday. "Apart from that, our clubs are running quick-aid initiatives all over the country, with children paying only £1 to get into a specified area. The younger fans are the lifeblood of the future – the next generation of season-ticket holders."



Lone celebration: Liverpool's Robbie Fowler (right) enjoys scoring on Sunday, despite a background of empty seats Photograph: Alex Livesey/Pro Sport

Why the cost outraged supporters

PETER GARRETT
Liverpool fan and co-founder of the Football Supporters' Association

"David Davies from the Football Association was on Radio Merseyside this morning claiming that the ticket prices were the same as last season, and saying that Everton fans were demanding more for their game at Elland Road."

But, if I remember rightly, the vast majority of their tickets then were for £14. The scale of prices may have been the same this time, but I can tell you for a fact that Liverpool received only 424 at £14, which is pathetic, and 1,580 at £22. All the rest, the other 90 per cent, were for the two higher prices, £30 and £38.

Television is only there doing live coverage because it's an exciting spectacle. They're not going to be interested if the games are played in half-empty stadiums

with no atmosphere. This is the kind of thing we've been telling the FA for 10 years, but their heads are stuck in the sand.

As for the final, the two clubs are getting a total of 51,000. Where are the other 29,000 going? To local FAs in Cornwall, Kenya and so on. In '89, after Hillsborough, the FA gave Liverpool and Everton 70 per cent of the allocation. We did a survey which showed that touting was reduced by 90 per cent."

DAVE WOODHALL
Editor of the Aston Villa fanzine 'Heroes & Villains'

"The ticket prices for Sunday were obscene. If you take into account the cost of programmes and official club transport – which Villa put up by £5 to £16.50 for Wembley the weekend before – a family of four following the Villa to the Coca-Cola final and to Old

Trafford would've been forking out as much as £500 in total.

Remember it was Villa's first FA semi-final for 36 years. Normally, people would have killed for tickets. But I believe there was a hidden agenda to hike up the prices. In the programme and the press the cheapest tickets were given as £22. The £14 ones didn't go on general sale.

I know season-ticket holders who didn't go. I paid £22 for a seat stuck in a corner of the Stretford End, where the view was neither bad nor brilliant, and we stood throughout the match anyway. People started picking the games to miss because of the cost of football. Now they're picking the ones to go to, and that worries me.

"We handed out red cards on Sunday [published by the FSA] for people to send to Graham Kelly at the FA in protest at ticket prices."

SHEILA SPIERS
Liverpool supporter and national administrator of the FSA

"We wrote to the FA before the semi-finals to say that the prices were ludicrous, but we've had no reply yet. Their early publicity suggested that there would be 'something to suit everyone's pockets', but only 10 per cent of Liverpool's allocation were for the lower prices."

"There's a group of about 25 of us who meet before matches for a drink and a chat. This time only four of us were there. Some said it was too expensive, but there's a family of four I know who probably could afford the money but who felt they had better things to spend £140 on."

"The problem goes deeper than one-off games. Although the Premier League have agreed to concessions for youngsters, they're virtually all in family areas. The little ones are happy to

go with mum and dad, but someone of 13 going on his or her own has to pay the full price. These are the fans of tomorrow. I'm just worried that the whole middle-class bubble is going to burst."

VIC MILLWARD
Villa fan of 42 years

"With prices of up to £38, it's no wonder there were huge banks of empty seats. Once you saw those it detracted from the occasion. We've staged lots of semi-finals at Villa Park and normally the atmosphere is great with hardly an inch of space."

On Sunday I went for a £22 ticket and five of us went in one car to save money. At Wembley against Leeds it cost me £36 for the match ticket, and if you add £5 for the programme, money for petrol, parking and for snacks, drinks or a meal, I reckoned it cost me at least £55."

Interview: Phil Shaw

aston villa			
FA CUP SPONSORED BY			
LITTLEWOODS - SEMI-FINAL			
SUN 31 MAR 1996 15:00:00 AFTERNOON			
TRINITY ROAD UPPER E			
DOOR	RC4	SEAT	PRICE
E4	K	76	38.00

Expensive pastime: A £38 ticket for the Villa Park semi

Fans are now seen as cash cows to be milked

GLENN MOORE

Football Correspondent

There were nearly 80,000 spectators roaring on their team during Sunday's FA Cup semi-finals, but the 10,000-plus empty seats spoke louder than any of the filled ones.

"Enough is enough" was their cry. "Our loyalty has been exploited for too long." Now, perhaps, the game will recognise that in its grasping rush towards

millionaire players and multi-million-pound television deals the most important people have been left behind. It had better, or the boom will turn to dust.

Supporters have long been treated like children, to be seen but not heard – except when creating the "atmosphere" so beloved by television. In the bad old days they were regarded as terrace fodder, expected to turn up every fortnight despite arcaic, often dangerous, facilities. Even after years of decline and

tragedy it took government legislation to change that.

Now they are seen as cash cows, to be milked at the gate, at the club megastore, and by superfluous membership schemes. While Manchester United fans complain about admission prices, those of Middlesbrough and Sunderland protest at season-ticket only entry. The clubs point to better stadiums, fans retort by noting that the Football Trust has paid for many of the improvements

and television was supposed to subsidise the rest – compensation, in part, for the constant switching of fixtures to inconvenient Sunday afternoons and Monday evenings.

The Football Association, freed from even a cursory nod at preserving fan-club relations, is even greedier. Ninety per cent of semi-final tickets were priced at £30-£38. Bland programmes were £3. The wonder is not that 10,000 stayed away, it is that so many turned up.

It is no surprise to find the guilty men are the same group that expect fans to pay up to £45 to watch England play friendlies. Crawl forward the Match and Grounds Committee, a 14-man covey who watch much of their professional football from the comfort of a directors' box, with a half-time buffet, a post-match drink and all for free. They include just five members of the professional game.

Meanwhile, players' earnings move beyond comprehension

and a disturbing number of directors and chairman are becoming rich through changing club structures, selling shares, or paying themselves vast salaries as managing directors.

They sit, in their panelled board rooms and bray "plenty more where you came from" at complaining fans. Not for ever, there won't be, not if prices continue to rise. And, when the stands are empty, will Bergkamp, Gullit and Sky still be interested?

Touts facing new crackdown

The Football Association has announced the most severe penalties it has ever imposed on players, officials and fans, after 1995 FA Cup final tickets were sold for up to 35 times their true value.

Thirty-six names appear on a list published by the FA yesterday – and some have been banned from receiving FA Cup final tickets for up to 20 years.

One £17 ticket was sold for what is believed to be a record sum of £640. A £30 seat fetched

£450 – a 1,500 per cent mark up. Last year's FA Cup final was the first at which new laws existed to combat the touts. Fines of up to £5,000 were available. The Home Office has yet to publish prosecution and conviction figures.

The FA said that it believes the new laws have helped but stresses that enforcement is the key. Demand for tickets for this year's FA Cup final is likely to be intense.

"We are sure the police and

Government will continue to help us fight this scourge in sport," the FA added. "For the FA's part, by imposing tough penalties, we are seeking to do everything we can. We are still investigating several other cases. We will be running our own undercover operation this year to find the source of the tickets that end up on the black market. Tickets for this year's final will remain at the same prices as the last two years, ranging from £17 to £60."

Clubs dismayed by RFU

Rugby Union
 STEVE BALE

England's leading clubs yesterday responded with dismay to the less emotive tone suddenly struck by the Rugby Football Union in their continuing debate about how club professionalism – now only five weeks away – is to be organised and controlled.

No more meetings have yet been scheduled between the union and EPRUC, which represents the first two divisions, and the imminence of the end of the RFU's professional moratorium is leading to gathering gloom about the prospects for resolving the situation.

Yesterday EPRUC officials met but decided against making any statement in response

to Sunday's pointed insistence by Cliff Brittle, chairman of the RFU executive, that "the soul of rugby is not for sale". Many of the major clubs regard Brittle, with his grass-roots constituency, as a prime obstacle to a settlement.

All bar one of the top 20 had boycotted an RFU meeting at Twickenham that was finally attended only by members of the Third and Fourth Divisions plus London Scottish. The boycotters were then taken aback when Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, insisted that television companies would negotiate only with the union.

In fact the clubs have been in contact with broadcasters throughout the months of their protracted talks with the RFU and would anticipate being in

a position to agree a TV deal there and then if the doomsday scenario came to pass and they fulfilled their ultimate threat of breaking away from the union.

The uncertainty is creating additional strains within clubs already apprehensive about how they will finance professionalism if they are blocked from taking the lion's share of TV revenue. "I have never known a situation where we are into April and still have no idea about our future list for next season," one First Division club officer said yesterday.

Gavin Jenkins, the Wales reserve hooker, said yesterday that he was considering an offer to join Bath, the English league leaders, from Swansea as an eventual successor to Graham Dawe.

'RANTING ON
 ABOUT WHO I INSURE WITH IS BORING. ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS GETTING GOOD VALUE FOR MONEY - 1



"I wanted fully comp for my car. I didn't have a big budget. AA Insurance came up trumps. Result."

AA Car Insurance

It costs less than you think

CALL DIRECT ON 0800 444 777

Also available in AA shops

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
 No. 29500, Tuesday 2 April By Aedred Monday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

ACROSS
 1 Encourage to get very hot around noon? (8)
 5 Left work carrying appropriate computer (6)
 10 One has to think people read act out in fun here? (9,6)
 11 External support has to be around longer (7)
 12 Bearing in alien environment could require good ones? (7)
 13 Primate in role is providing protection for soldiers (8)
 15 Make certain no resistance is to come consequentially (5)
 18 Inclines to have a bit of sleep in French beds (5)
 20 Final schemings to put a stop to PE etc? (8)

DOWN
 23 Acclamation allowed to reverberate in Israeli city (3,4)
 25 It can spin in either direction (7)
 26 Scott and friends? (9,6)
 27 No longer healthy provides no inspiration? (6)
 28 Awful theatrical whodunnit features this? (4,4)
 1 Live as a prisoner in the light (6)
 2 Yield to cricketers, they can be a protected species (5,4)
 3 Resistance to change in a rite that's to be reformed (7)
 4 Marshal holds editor to be in want (5)
 6 Organise a right to go on a number of mountains (7)

WORDSEARCH
 G I E R A E M T
 O R I G I N A L N O T A B L E
 I N G T Y E D S R A P
 S E E P B A N I F F A I R
 E O A N U E G A
 R A N K L E S L E G L E S S
 V L H R T
 A T H E R T S T A I N E R
 I O V E O M E T
 O G R E G R U F F G R I P
 I A R R A S V O
 R E T S I N A B A I L I F E
 E T N I E G N R
 S O N G A I N D I A N C I E